Donum Authoris. tho. Smith

Bourignianism Detected:

OR THE

Delusions and Errors

OF

ANTONIA BOURIGNON,

AND HER

Growing Sect.

Which may also Serve for a Discovery of all other ENTHUSIASTICAL IMPOSTURES.

By *JOHN COCKBURN*, D. D.

Narrative I.

LONDON,

Printed for *C. Brome* at the *Gun* at the West-End of St. *Paul's*; *W. Keblewhite* at the *Swan* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard; and *H. Hindmarsh* at the *Golden-Ball* over-gainst the *Royal Exchange*, *Cornhill*, 1698.

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PREFACE.

AS before the coming of Jesus Christ, it is certain, that God did at sundry times, and in diverse manners, speak by his Prophets, to prepare the way of this his only and well-beloved Son, and to dispose Mankind to receive this Soveraign Lord of Heaven and Earth, with all suitable Respect, Honour and Submission; so since his return to Heaven, many have pretended Divine and particular Revelations from thence, authorizing them to alter or add to the Rules and Doctrine which he taught and established, for securing and promoting our Salvation: which is no small Argument for the Divine Authority, of the Books of the New Testament, where this is very often and in expres terms foretold.

Almost in every Age, and in every Country, some or other have set up for Prophets, and have spoken confidently in the Name of the Lord. But there is one in this Age, viz. Antonia Bourignon, whose Pretences are greater, and far beyond all were before; more cannot, nor yet so much can be said for the Apostles themselves: for they were but Servants and Ministers to Jesus Christ, who (if she may be believed) only laid the Foundation for her Work, and did no more than prepare the way for her Design. The last and greatest Manifestation of the Divine Wisdom, Power, Love and Goodness was reserved to her, and therefore she is and must be a greater Person than Jesus Christ himself.

It is not rare and unusual to see Persons exalt themselves above measure, and to think of themselves above what they ought to think: But it is somewhat astonishing, that others should be affected with their Pride and Vanity, and taken with their Delusion or Imposture, and that they should become Zealous to support them. Yet so it is, that the strongest Delusions and the greatest Imposture, have had Admirers and Followers: and so hath Madamoiselle Bourignon. She had only two or three Disciples, who adhered closely to her in her Life-time; for some who admired her upon the first Acquaintance, deserted her afterwards. But since her Death, a good many have been proselited, both to her Doctrine and the Opinion of her Person: there be several on the other side the Sea, but which concerns us most, the Infection has spread hither to this Isle, and has seized many especially in Scotland, which certainly obligeth every one to contribute all he can to put a stop to it, and to prevent as much as possible, the dangerous Consequence. They are not mean and ignorant Persons who follow this Woman, they are some of the better sort, who have been reputed, Men of Sense, Learning and Probity; which should lay the Pride of Man, and teach him who standeth to take heed lest he fall.

Errour, like Sickneſs, ſeizeth upon ſtrong Conſtitutions, as well as the weak: And as ſometimes the Air is more infectious, and the Bodies of Men more ſuſceptible of Diſeaſes than at other times; ſo there are times which favour Errour very much, and in which it doth exceedingly ſpread. At preſent, there is, all the World over, a wonderful Diſpoſition, in all ſerious Perſons, to Enthuſiaſm, and the Deluſions which follow it; as in others a tendency to Atheiſm and Scepticiſm: both which are Preſages of ſome impendent Judgment.

I am one of the weakeſt who may enter into the field, againſt theſe Enemies to Truth and True Religion: But God ſometimes doth work by the meaneſt Inſtruments; and ſeeing at this time I have no Charge, which requires my attendance, I reſolve to employ my Time and Thoughts this way, that I may at leaſt ſhew my Zeal to the Cauſe of God, to whoſe Service I was devoted. I have already publiſh'd Two Parts of the Enquiry into the Nature, Evidence and Neceſſity of Chriſtian Faith; *and I intend a* Third, *as ſoon as the preſent Task is over, if not before it; by which (as well as by many other more accurate Treatiſes) Atheiſts and Scepticks may ſee that the* Chriſtian Religion *is no cunning Fable, but a certain Truth, and worthy to be received. I have turned a while from the Atheiſt, only that I may, at the deſire of ſome, encounter the Enthuſiaſt, who truly does as much diſſervice to Religion, and is the beſt Tool which the Atheiſt doth work by.*

At firſt, I deſign'd only to give ſome pat Inſtances to prove that Antonia Bourignon *was not Inſpired, nor her Doctrine agreeable to the Scripture; which is ſufficient to preſerve any from following this Way: But ſeeing this is the firſt time that* Bourignianiſm *was undertaken, I was perſuaded to do it fully, and not to make an imperfect Work of it; and eſpecially ſeeing the Examination of this, diſcovers all other Enthuſiaſtical Impoſtures and Deluſions. Our* Quakers *and* Philadelphians, *as well as the* Quietiſts *and* Pietiſts *abroad, are of the ſame kidney, and do all ſtand upon the ſame foundation; ſo that what overturns one, overturns all.*

To have publiſh'd at once a full Examination of Enthuſiaſm, Inſpiration, Viſions, and the particular Tenets of Antonia Bourignon, *would have required a longer time than the impatient curioſity of ſome would allow: For this cauſe therefore, and for ſome other reaſons, I have been prevailed with to ſet it forth by Parts, which are independent upon one another. This is the* Firſt Narrative; *which ſhews the high Opinion that the Diſciples of* Antonia Bourignon *have of her, and the Reaſons for it: The next ſhall go inſtantly to the Preſs: So that one may be expected and had always within three or four Weeks at moſt after another. I pray God grant that they may be a means to recover ſome, and to preſerve others from thoſe Deluſions that diſturb the Peace and Unity of the Church, and which lead private Perſons unawares both into Temporal and Eternal Ruine.*

Bourig-

Bourignianism DETECTED.

Narrative I.

THE CHARACTER OF *Madamoiselle* ANTONIA BOURIGNON, By her Disciples, Consider'd and Examin'd.

ANtonia Bourignon, the Daughter of one *John Bourignon*, an Italian Merchant, who lived at *Lisle* in *Flanders*, was born the 13th. of *January*, 1616; and she died at *Franeker*, in the Province of *Friseland*, the 30th. of *Octob.* 1680: so that she lived Threescore and four Years, Nine Months, and Fourteen Days. None of her Friends had the comfort of attending her when she died: but a Considerable Person, who some days before was al- I.

lowed to visit her, came very opportunely to kiss her Feet, as she was laid in the Coffin, and to get her buried after the manner she her self desired. And he who gives this Account of her, adds, 'That she was 'the most Divine and the most Pure Soul that ever 'lived upon the Earth, since Jesus Christ. She was 'of a middle Stature, slender and delicate; her Countenance was agreeable; her Complexion brown; 'her Forehead broad, and without Wrinkles; and her 'Eyes were a little bluish. She had an ingenious 'Air; and such an exquisite Sight, that she never 'used Glasses. Her Nose was well made, and proportionable. She was Out-mouthed, having Lips and 'Teeth somewhat big. Age had whiten'd her Hairs; 'Sickness had made her Face lean; and she was hollow about the Eyes. Her Mien, her Speech, her 'Address, and way of receiving Persons, were very 'taking and agreeable. Her Gate was grave, bearing 'her Head a little high; and she did not appear to be 'above Forty Years old. All her Senses, except 'Tasting, were strong and lively. She was of a quick 'and active Disposition. She was never sad, but always of an even Temper. She would never suffer 'her Picture to be drawn; not only because she did 'not approve of this sort of Vanity, but also because 'it very much concern'd her not to be known, upon 'the account of her Persecutors. As to the Gifts and 'Qualities of her Spirit, her Writings do partly shew 'them; but none is capable to know the greatness of 'them, save He who bestowed them.

La vie Continue, c. 34. n. 3.

II. This same Person tells us, 'That from her Infancy 'she had the gift of Chastity in so high a degree, 'that she often said, That in all her life, she never 'had, not even upon a Temptation or Surprize, the 'least

Ibid. c. 2. p. 21.

'least Thought which might be unbecoming the 'Chastity of the purest Virgin-state. St. *Teresa* 'writes of her self, That God sometimes favour'd her 'with the same Grace. But as for Madamoiselle *Bou-* '*rignon*, she possess'd it to that degree, that it over- 'flowed (if one may have leave to speak so) upon 'those who conversed with her. Her Presence and 'Conversation did send forth such an Odour of Con- 'tinence, as made others forget the Pleasures of the 'Flesh: And I leave it (saith he) to the Experience 'of those who read her Books with attention, to judge 'whether they do not feel some Impressions of, and 'whether they be not drawn with Inclinations to this 'Vertue that is so acceptable to God.

Though this *Character* of Madamoiselle *Bourignon* be very great, and declares the great Affection of him who gives it, yet it is very far short of what is further said of her; for this only respects her private Personal State, and sets her forth as a Woman singularly Good and Vertuous in this corrupt Age: But if we will take the Word of this anonymous Author, and some others, this Woman was above all that is Humane; she was inhabited by the Spirit of God; and all she did or spoke, was to be ascribed to Him, and to be reckon'd not so much hers as His, who design'd that she should be the greatest Blessing that ever was conferr'd on Mankind; therefore they are not either afraid or ashamed to bestow upon her the Epithets that are given to *Jesus Christ*; they set her on the same Level with Him; they honour her with his Titles; they apply to her the Prophecies which the Church hath always believed to be meant of Him; they draw a Parallel betwixt Him and Her, and do make Him

III.

the Type of Her; and not Him but Her the laſt and higheſt Expreſſion of God's Love to Mankind. 'To 'intimate which, God ſent a Comet when ſhe was 'born, another when ſhe firſt began to write; and 'a third at her death, which was greater and more 'dreadful than any that was ever ſeen before. She 'is the Divine Sun of Righteouſneſs; ſhe is Truth, 'pure Truth, and the only Truth that can guide 'one to Heaven and Eternal Life. There is no other 'way of Life Eternal (ſays he) but what is in the 'Mouth, in the Writings, and in the Life of the Ibid. c. 34. 'moſt holy *Antonia Bourignon*. And again, If ever 'the Church of God be edified upon Earth, it can-'not be by any other means but by the Remon-'ſtrances, the Rules, Doctrine, Spirit and Example 'of Madamoiſelle *Bourignon*. He calls her the Wo-'man ſpoken of in the *Revelation*, who was ſhewn 'to St. *John* in a Viſion, whom (ſaith he) our Eyes 'have ſeen, and by whom our Ears have heard, and 'our Hands have handled the Word of Life. And as Ib. p. 598, 601. he renders unto God Thanks for the Grace of know-ing her, and of being acquainted with her; ſo he moſt paſſionately expoſtulates with God, for ſuffering her to die, 'who was the only Juſt, the only Holy, the 'only Perſon who had the Spirit of God. Where, 'Lord? where is now your Holy Church? Alas! it 'is altogether deſtroyed, and ſubſiſts only in ruined 'Houſes, in ſome ſcatter'd Stones; which, as the 'Stones of the ancient Sanctuary, are *poured out upon 'the top of every ſtreet*, broken, defaced and unpo-'liſh'd, and there is none to gather them together, 'nor to ſet about the building of your *New Jeruſalem*; 'for you have taken away the holy Inſtrument of

'your

'your Spirit, whom you had called and filled with 'the Treasures of your Grace, to labour in that Work! 'You have extinguish'd the Light which you sent 'to the World, for guiding well-disposed Souls. 'Where is now, Lord, the Truth of your Promises? 'Where are now your ancient Mercies, which never 'suffer'd the World to be destitute of living Witnesses? 'How have you suffer'd the time to come, in which 'it may be said, without exception, that *the righ-* 'teous is perished; *there is no more a prophet amongst* 'us, *nor have we any who knows how long?*

I might bring many other Passages out of this Author, to this purpose, but I judge these are sufficient to prove his Sentiments of *Antonia Bourignon:* And they are not peculiar to him; for all who have taken this Woman's part, are of the same mind. He who writes the Apologetick Preface to her Works, employs all the Rhetorick, which Passion, and a strong-heated Passion can inspire, in defence of this Woman, to remove the Prejudices which are entertain'd against her Person and Doctrine, and to convince the World that she was filled with the Holy Ghost, and sent to renew the Church, and to bring it to its utmost Perfection. If this Author ought to be believed, all the Words and Writings of this Woman are Sacred as Scripture it self, they ought to have the same Authority, and should be as devoutly read; yea, much rather read: for if it be true what he says, they are more profitable, and do discover more fully the hidden Mysteries of God: As the Author of the *Leipsick Transactions* observes, he makes the New Scripture of Madam *Bourignon* either to confirm the Old, or to explain them, or to correct them. In this Preface, the IV.

Acta Lipsica Mense Jan. 1696. p. 9.

the Author conſiders the ſeveral ways by which God may and doth communicate himſelf to Men: and he aſſerts confidently of Madamoiſelle *Bourignon*, That God uſed all theſe ſeveral ways with her, as Viſions, external Voices, intimate Impreſſions upon the Soul, and ſuch ineffable Communications, as made her to know and underſtand the Mind of God, and all Truths as they are in him: 'Her whole Life
Pref. Apol. p. 188. '(ſaith he) was a continued Series of God's Word and 'Diſcourſe with her, and of hers with him.' And again, 'She had ſo often thoſe Communications with
Ib. p. 192. 'God, (which he reckons up in the Second Claſſis) 'that they were very common with her, by which 'God communicated to her the intimate Knowledge 'of Things Divine and Humane, Matters of Right and 'Fact, Things Speculative and Practical, Things Myſtical, Things appertaining to Faith and Morality, 'Things Future and Prophetick, ſuch as are the Laſt 'Things, of which ſhe has often ſpoken.' Finally, He makes a kind of Union between God and her Soul, and
Ib. p. 193. ſays, "That they ſpoke to one another as two Friends 'uſe to do; and that the Diſcourſe which ſhe had 'with God, as well as that which He had with her, 'proceeded not from her ſelf, but from the motion of 'God, which prompted her to ſpeak; and that her 'Books are filled with ſuch Divine Conferences.

V. The Prophets and Apoſtles were Men of like Paſſions and Infirmities with others, and ſeveral inſtances of their frailty are upon Record, at the Direction and Inſpiration of the infinite Wiſdom of God: But this Anonymous Advocate for *Antonia Bourignon*, as well as the other above mentioned, who continued and enlarged the Hiſtory of her Life, begun by her ſelf,

ſelf, I ſay, he will not allow her to be guilty of any ſlip, or inadvertency, or failing, in Word or Deed, unworthy of the Spirit of God it ſelf. As it is in the *Leipſick Tranſactions*; *Tantâ cum Religione veneratur, ut & Solœciſmos ejus, & in ſtylo errata dictamini divino tribuat.* He juſtifies all ſhe ſaid or did, by Parallels from the Prophets, from Chriſt and the Apoſtles; and confidently aſſerts, That the Oppoſition ſhe meets with, the Prejudices and Out-cries againſt her, or her Doctrine, proceed from the ſame Spirit and Principles which perſecuted them: Ib. p. 197. For to give you his Sentiments in ſhort, 'She was 'the Pureſt, the moſt Diſ-intereſted and Self-denied 'Soul, and the moſt reſigned to God that ever was 'upon Earth. The World, and all that is in the 'World, was of no Value to her; ſhe was perfectly 'denied to all Senſe, and to every thing that depended upon Imagination. In her Divine Conferences '(that is, her converſation with God) ſhe uſed neither 'Ideas nor Meditations; but was in an admirable 'vacuity of all Deſire of knowing either this or that: 'having no will of her own, nor any Inclination 'nor Fondneſs for any Sentiment, no, not the moſt 'intimate and moſt divine; but a total, perfect, and 'moſt accompliſhed Reſignation for receiving what 'it would pleaſe God to communicate to her, and 'no other thing, with an abſolute Reſolution to 'execute whatever would pleaſe God; tho' in doing it, 'it behoved to combat the World and Hell, and loſe 'a Thouſand Lives. In this Habitual and Invariable 'State, where ſhe continued from the Eighteenth 'year of her Age, to the laſt moment of her Life: 'None but God alone could act in the Fund of her

'Soul,

'Soul, in all those several ways mentioned: And the 'whole Conduct of such a Person could not be but 'Divine, seeing she was united to God by a perfect 'Resignation.

VI. Now that the Reputation of *Antonia Bourignon* may not stand upon the Credit of two obscure and unknown Authors, who were afraid to expose their Names; that what hath been said, may not be thought their particular Rhapsodies, I will confirm the same, by Instances from some who have publickly owned it, and do glory in it. I will begin with Monsieur *de Cort*, one of her first Disciples, who was Superiour of the Oratory, and Pastor of Saint *John* at *Mechlin*, and who (as it is said) lost his Life in her Cause. This Man, in a Letter to the Vicar-General of the Archbishoprick of *Mechlin*, after having told him how he had happened to read that Passage, 2 *Kings* xxii. about *Hilkiah*'s finding the Book of the Law of the Lord, and sending to *Huldah*, the Propheteſs, to enquire about it; he writes, 'That having made a 'very serious Reflection upon all this, he was touched 'with a sensible Grief, considering that we have here 'an Excellent Woman, a Friend of God, the Favou-'rite of Jesus, the Organ of the Holy Ghost, who 'is greater than *Huldah*, to whom God has commu-'nicated himself extraordinarily, and to whom he 'has discovered all his Secrets. She never yet de-'ceived any person, was always faithful, firm, con-'stant, immoveable; She possesseth the Holy Ghost, 'with his Gifts of Wisdom, Understanding, Know-'ledge, Piety, Courage, Counsel, fear of God; and 'together with these, she possesses the Twelve Fruits 'of the same Spirit; Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience,

'Longa-

'Longanimity, Goodneſs, and the reſt: The Eight 'Beatitudes do alſo ſhine in her; ſhe lives not to her 'ſelf, but altogether to God; ſhe ſpeaks as ſhe lives, 'and ſhe lives as ſhe ſpeaks: Her words are Lively, 'Efficacious, and Operative; they are conform to 'the Goſpel and the other Scriptures. Her Life is 'altogether miraculous: And I do remember that 'which your Reverence hath often ſaid to me, how 'that ſhe was an admirable Maid, that there was 'never found her like; we are happy to have ſuch 'a Treaſure; and truly ſhe hath the Holy Ghoſt. 'Moreover, I remember, how I have brought Letters 'to her, in which you have earneſtly deſired her 'Prayers for your ſelf and for your Friends, recom-'mending to her many particular Affairs; and now 'as concerning the Publick, in the time of Univerſal 'Scourges; in all theſe Dangers no body conſults 'her, no body makes Prayers to her, no body em-'ploys her! Theſe Thoughts have touched my Heart 'very ſenſibly. As for me, I have thanked you, and 'do ſtill thank you infinitely; becauſe God inſpired 'you to ſend me to this Creature. I never received, 'neither from Arch-Biſhop, nor from Biſhops, nor 'from Paſtors, nor from my Directors and Superiours, 'nor from Saints, nor from God himſelf immediately, 'more good than from her by God only. I beſeech 'you, for the Honour of God, for the Good of the 'Church, for your own private good, and for the 'good of all thoſe who are under your Charge, to 'conſult her, and to believe her as to that which 'ſhe ſhall tell you from God concerning theſe deplo-'rable Times. St. *Jerome* ſays, That *Deuteronomium 'eſt ſecunda Lex, & Evangelicæ legis præfiguratio,*

'that is, *Deuteronomy*, or the Book that was found 'in the time of *Huldah*, is the Second Law, or the 'Second Eſtabliſhment of the Law of God, and that 'it is a Figure of what ſhall be under the Evangelical 'Law. Now, I am of the Mind, that the Evangelical 'Law, which was firſt Eſtabliſhed, and afterwards 'forgotten and loſt, ſhall be renewed and re-eſtabliſhed, 'as *Deuteronomy* was a Second time under the Mini-'ſtry of this New *Huldah*.' This Letter is prefixed to the Treatiſe which bears the Title of, *The Word of God, or the interiour Life of Madamoiſelle* Bourignon: Where alſo there are Extracts of ſome Letters of the ſame Vicar-General, bearing a Teſtimony unto her.

VII. Here we have had one bearing witneſs to *Antonia Bourignon*, not upon hear-ſay, or any uncertain Report, but from his own Experience. There is another ſtill alive, who knew her, was intimately acquainted with her, and who gives her a Character above what either Man or Woman (beſides Jeſus Chriſt) ever deſerved. It is Monſieur *Poiret*, who may be called the Chief Diſciple, or Firſt Apoſtle of *Antonia Bourignon*, he having ſpread her Fame and propagated her Opinions more ſtudiouſly, and with more Zeal and Fervour than any other. As St. *Paul deſired to know nothing ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified*; ſo this Man ſeems to deſire to know nothing but Madamoiſelle *Bourignon*. He does not believe a God more firmly, than that this Woman was divinely inſpired: His words were (to ſome of my Acquaintance who viſited him) *Tam certus ſum eam Virginem inſpiratam eſſe quam Deum exiſtere.* She is ever in his Mouth, and on all occaſions he recommends her Books as having Light and Inſtruction, and all deſirable

rable Advantages above all the Books in the World, without excepting the Scriptures. Some few Years after her Death, he ſent a Memorial to Monſieur *Bale*, to be inſerted in the *Novelles de la Republique de la Lettre*, that all the learned World might have the Knowledge of this wonderful Woman: And becauſe Monſieur *Bale* had dropt ſomething which did not ſavour of that reſpect which is due to Madamoiſelle *Bourignon*, he again expoſtulated with him, and corrected him by another Memorial; both which may be ſeen in the Ninth Articles for the Months of *April* and *May*, for the Year 1685.

All which Monſieur *Poiret* writes now, is upon the Principles of this Woman: Her Doctrine is the Foundation of his *Oeconomy Divine*, in which he imagines that he has explained all the Myſteries both of Nature and Religion, cleared all Difficulties either in Philoſophy or Divinity, and revealed the ſecret Purpoſes of the Counſel of God, both in reſpect of what is paſt, and of what is to come. All theſe great things he hath done by the Light which his Beloved Miſtreſs afforded him: Take his own words for it.

'I ought to acknowledge, that theſe Principles and *Pref.* n. 28.
'many other things are not of my own Invention,
'but that I have been led to them by the Divine
'Writings, and by the Inſtruction of one of Un-
'known Worth. I ſhould never have come to the
'knowledge of theſe Truths of my ſelf, if the Light Tom. 3.
'which God communicated to one of his Saints, C. 11. n. 16.
'had not Adminiſtred the Occaſion: She is a Perſon
'whoſe Writings have led me into the Knowledge of
'the ſolid Principles of all things. Madamoiſelle
'*Bourignon* hath received from God ſuch certain and

'particular Light, as without which I neither could 'have ſeen, nor been ſenſible in this manner of theſe
Ibid. c. 12. p. 21. 'Divine Truths, how palpably ſoever the Text of 'Scripture may ſeem to lead the attentive Reader 'unto them. God hath drawn me forth, not by 'the force and ſubtilty of my wretched Reaſon, nor 'by Study, or by Reading the Books of Learned 'Men, but by the Writings of a Woman, through 'which God has touched and illuminated my Heart, 'making me ſee a perfect Light in all theſe Matters
Ibid. c. 17. p. 340. 'and Difficulties, as well as almoſt in all other 'things, whether Divine or Humane, Natural or Su-'pernatural. Behold a great and notable Truth, and 'a Key of an infinite number of admirable Lights 'for explaining a Thouſand Paſſages of Divine Scrip-'ture, and of the charitable and adorable Conduct 'of God towards Men? Nothing is wanting to make 'this rare and incomparable Truth to be received of 'Men, but that its Diſcovery, and the Explication 'of theſe Paſſages of Scripture, which point it out, 'have not been communicated by ſome Ancient Fa-'ther, or by ſome great Doctor, but by an unlearned 'Woman, to whom God has been pleaſed to mani-'feſt himſelf ſo far, notwithſtanding of the contrary
Tom. 4. chap. 16. p. 379. 'Judgment of ſome bearded Animals.' Whoſoever 'would ſee theſe things in the moſt ſenſible and moſt 'Divine Light that can be deſired, have no more to 'do but to conſult the Works of Madamoiſelle *Bou-'rignon*; particularly, theſe Three or Four; *The re-'newing of the Goſpel-Spirit*, *Antichriſt Diſcovered*, '*The Light of the World, and the Touchſtone:* For I 'do acknowledge, That I have not perceived, that 'God, ſince the beginning of the World, did ever

'diſcover

'diſcover more clearly, more ſenſibly, more ſtrongly, 'more plainly the greatneſs of Man's Corruption, 'as he hath done in our Days, by that excellent 'Organ of the Holy Ghoſt: And nothing but the 'Diſcovery of this Evil has offended all wilfully 'wicked Perſons at her; their Proud Heart would 'not humble it ſelf, nor be covered with Confu-'ſion, nor can they be induced to hate and re-'nounce themſelves. The Devil alſo, their good 'Friend, who dwells in their corrupt Hearts, not 'enduring to be thus expoſed; has reſolved to em-'ploy by his Diabolical Slaves, againſt this Divine 'Light, and this Holy Soul which declares it, his 'two ordinary Machines, *Lying* and *Violence*, which 'he hath inſpired abundantly into the Hearts of 'many wicked Perſons, both Learned and Idiots, 'who have not been wanting hitherto to labour 'in this, as it becomes them, in favour of their 'Maſter and King, the Murtherer, the Perſecutor, 'the Lyar, the Calumniator from the Beginning, 'who will one Day give them his common Pay, if 'they do not defeat the Work which they have Dia-'bolically made for him againſt the moſt Divine, the 'moſt Splendid, and the moſt Solid Truth which ever 'yet appeared. Thus far Monſieur *Poiret*. Tom. 7. c. 3. p. 92.

VIII. But that I may not be thought to impoſe upon the *Engliſh* Reader, by Quotations from foreign Books, which are little known, and in few hands, I will juſtifie this high Character of *Antonia Bourignon*, by Paſſages of a parallel ſtrain out of the Prefaces to her Treatiſe of *The Light of the World*, which is now rendred into Engliſh, *to be read, underſtood, and conſidered by all who deſire to be ſaved*, as the Title-page bears.

bears. There her eminent Sanctity is declared and ſet forth in words which were never applicable to any Creature before; for none but *Jeſus Chriſt* was ever ſaid to be *perfect*, and *without ſin*. 'But the Purity 'of *Antonia Bourignon*'s Life was exact and conſtant; 'ſhe was a perfect Pattern and living Exemplar of 'the Spirit and Doctrine of the Goſpel. In ſhort, We 'may all truly affirm, That we never obſerved in 'her any Vice, Sin, or any Weakneſs of Spirit; 'but a perfect and ſolid Vertue, ſurpaſſing Natural 'and Humane Strength; which made us ſay, That 'her Life was altogether Miraculous, as if *Adam* had 'never ſinned in her. And as to her Knowledge and Underſtanding, it is made Infinite; 'for there were '*hid in her the Treaſures of Divine Wiſdom*, which 'enabled her to utter things unheard of, ſo marvel-'lous and ſublime, that we often remained quite loſt 'with Admiration; for we had never heard ſuch 'things. She explained likewiſe the Holy Scrip-'tures ſo perfectly, that none of the holy Fathers 'have ever ſo done, nor any body ſince the Creation 'of the World. She knew the ſecret Thoughts of 'Men's Hearts, and Things to come; and did not 'foretell them by way of Suppoſition, or related 'them as if ſhe had dreamt them. We found alſo, di-'verſe times, that ſhe could tell what paſt in her ab-'ſence, and how our Souls behaved themſelves to-'wards God. In ſhort, This Divine Soul told us ſo 'many Secrets of the Myſtical and Inward Life, that 'all our Theology was too ſhort and inſufficient to 'anſwer her to ſo high Queſtions, not only in Mat-'ters of Theology, but alſo in all other Matters, ac-'cording to the various Rencounters and Occurrences

Preface to the Engliſh Reader, p. 21.

M. *Corte's Pref.* p. 43.

Ib. p. 17.

Ib. p. 41.

Ib. p. 44, 45.

Ibid.

'which

'which fell out: ſo that one would have thought, 'that though a Man had peruſed all ſorts of Hiſtories, 'and grown old in the ſtudy of all ſorts of Sciences, 'he could not know, with ſuch Underſtanding, all the 'things which this Pilgrimeſs told us. It is impoſ-'ſible to write in particular the admirable things 'which we have heard of this Pilgrimeſs: ſo that We Ib. p. 46. 'may ſay of her Diſcourſes, what St. *Paul* ſaid of his 'Rapture, That *he had ſeen and heard things which 'eyes had not ſeen, nor ear heard, and that it has not 'entered into the mind of man what God has prepared 'for his elect.*

Now, leſt any ſhould think that this extraordinary Knowledge came to her by Natural Means, or that it was the effect of ſome Art and Induſtry, which others had not the happineſs to know, neither were capable to undergo; we are told, 'That ſhe never Ib. p. 41. 'read, nor learn'd of any body; That ſhe was with-'out Study, even without Reading; and, which is Ib. p. 33. 'more, without Meditation.' Years and Experience 'make others Wiſe and Knowing, but ſhe had her vaſt Knowledge from the beginning: ſhe was not wiſer in her Old Age than in her Youth; for ſhe was infallible in both: neither was there any occa-ſion for correcting or amending that which ſhe ſpoke or wrote in her firſt years; 'For if you peruſe her Ib. p. 21. 'Writings impartially, you will meet with many 'remarkable Characters that are not ordinarily to be 'found in many Writings. A clear and diſtinct Ac-'count of the Eſſential Truths of Chriſtianity, with 'a conſtant urging of them as *the one thing neceſſary*, 'and diſtinguiſhing them from the acceſſory Truths 'which are not neceſſary to Salvation; an inimitable 'ſimpli- IX.

'ſimplicity of Expreſſion, which a Child may under-
'ſtand, with as ſingular a ſublimity of Thoughts, a
'convincing power and force going along with them;
'a plain unfolding, in a few Lines, the Difficulties
'about which the Learned write many Volumes; a
'conſtant harmony and uniformity of Sentiments,
'in the Writings of a courſe of forty years, from
'about the Twenty third to the Sixty fifth year of
'her age, in which ſhe died, with an evidence and
'clearneſs to the conviction of our Natural Reaſon:
'And all this by one who never read any Books;
'never converſed with the Learned, to be inſtructed
'by them; never premeditated what ſhe wrote;
'never blotted out nor mended what was once writ-
'ten, but being attentive to the Love of God, in
'the calm and inward recollection of her Spirit, wrote
'as faſt as her hand could guide the Pen; and when
'ſome Writings were laid by unfiniſh'd, for ſome
'years, returned to them and finiſh'd them after the
'ſame manner, without reading any more of what
'had been written, than ſome few of the immediately
'foregoing Lines, to make a due connexion.' Thus
Memory, and thoſe Rational diſcuſſive Faculties which
help others to the knowledge of Truth, were of no
uſe to her; becauſe they make her to have had an
Ib. p. 13. immediate intuition of all things in God, *with whom ſhe had inward Converſation from her Childhood.* She
neither did nor would learn any thing from the
Scriptures, though they were given by Inſpiration,
and were deſigned to make every Man of God perfect,
and *throughly inſtructed to every good word and work.*
She would take nothing from the ſecond-hand, but
would have all things immediately from God him-
ſelf;

ſelf; and therefore ſhe asked Him Queſtions, and received Anſwers from Him, about the ſmalleſt matters. In a word, the deſign of theſe three *Prefaces* is to prove, That all her Words and Thoughts are God's, and that the Spirit was not given to her by meaſure, no more than it was to *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that there was the ſame reaſon for both: For as God had choſen a Virgin for his Mother; ſo he had choſen another Virgin to be the Organ of his Light and Spirit, by whom he deſigned to renew his Church, and to give the laſt Blow and Overthrow to Satan's Kingdom; for which cauſe ſhe is called *the Light of the World*: and theſe words of *Iſaiah* are applied unto her, *The people that walked in darkneſs have ſeen a great light: They that dwell in the land of the ſhadow of death, upon them hath the light ſhined.* And upon this account, Monſieur *de Cort* ſays, 'I look upon 'her Acquaintance, as a greater favour than all the 'Graces and Favours which God hath beſtowed on 'me in this World, yea, even than my Creation it 'ſelf; for that would ſerve me in little ſtead, without 'the working out of my Salvation, which would 'have been in great danger, if I had not attained to 'the knowledge of my ſelf, and of the Deſigns and 'Marvels of God, which I have learned and diſco-'vered by the means of this Creature; and ſhe has 'certainly been ſent me as the only Means of the Per-'fection of my Soul, and of all thoſe who will profit 'by the recital of this *Narrative*, which I find my 'ſelf obliged to publiſh, for the profit of many. This 'is the true *treaſure hid in the earth*; he who ſhall 'find it, ought to ſell all that he has, to buy this 'Ground, to the end he may find and diſcover this

Ib. p. 19.

Ib. p. 46, 47.

'Treaſure, and take it up with Joy, as the moſt pre-
'cious thing in the World.

I have inſiſted the longer upon the Character of Madamoiſelle *Bourignon*, her perſonal Endowments and Qualifications, her Divine Miſſion and Authority, as they are declared and ſet forth by her Diſciples, becauſe they are Material Points in our Enquiry about her: And for the ſame reaſon, I have choſe to give theſe things in their own words, that it may appear to all, that I do not charge them with things which they do not, neither will own.

X. And now I may have liberty to add, That if Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* deſerves the Character, which is here given to her; if it be true what theſe Authors I have quoted do ſay of her; if their Commendations and Praiſes are not raſh and groundleſs, but built upon a ſolid Foundation, then ſhe is, not only a very Singular and Extraordinary Perſon, but, without exception, the greateſt that ever was Born of a Woman; She is above all the Ancient Patriarchs; ſhe is to be preferred to *Moſes* and the Prophets, to *John* the Baptiſt and the Apoſtles; and at leaſt ſhe ought to be honoured equally with Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſaid to be *God bleſſed for ever*. She was as much without Sin as he was; and her Body was of a better Frame and Temper; for his was ſo much waſted by his Travels and the fatigues of his Miniſtry, that he ſeemed to be Fifty while he was not much above Thirty: Whereas *Antonia Bourignon* did not appear to be Forty years old, when ſhe was Sixty and odd. And though I cannot pretend, that they do aſſert, in expreſs terms, that ſhe was perſonally united to the God-head, yet I do think it is a clear Conſequence from

from what they ſay; for I cannot underſtand how otherwiſe ſhe could know all Truths, the deepeſt Myſteries of Nature and Religion, things hidden from the Wiſeſt in all Ages; nor how ſhe could, on all Occaſions, ſpeak and write about both ſmall and great Matters certainly, clearly, and infallibly, as well as live up to the higheſt Perfection of an Univerſal Piety; and all this without conſulting either Men or Books, without previous Reflection and Meditation; I ſay, I cannot underſtand how all this could be done by a meer Creature; and therefore ſhe muſt either have been always perſonally united to the Deity, and ſo to be eſteemed *God-Woman*, or elſe, as ſome Ancient Hereticks ſaid of Jeſus Chriſt, her Body and Humane Nature were not real, but a meer Phantome and Apparition by which God was pleaſed to declare his Mind and Will unto Men. And which ſoever of theſe be held, or whatever way God acted in her and by her, all her Words and Writings are Sacred as Scripture; they are of the ſame Authority, and do deſerve the ſame reſpect, and ought to be read publickly, for the Honour of God, and the Edification of Men. Finally, there ought to be a Commemoration of *Antonia Bourignon* in the Publick Liturgies, as well as of Jeſus Chriſt, and of the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles. And as the Church has always uſed to give unto God Names and Titles, from the Signal Manifeſtations of himſelf; and as the latter took always place of the former, becauſe more honourable and glorious; thus *the God of* Abraham, *the fear of* Iſaac, *he that brought the Children of* Iſrael *out of* Egypt, *and delivered them from their Captivity*, which were God's Names in former times, have been laid aſide, to give way to

that of the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*: So this, and all these should now give place *to the God of* Antonia Bourignon, *to the Spirit who spoke by her*, because she has brought a greater, a clearer, and a fuller Light into the World, and has made greater Discoveries of the Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness of God, than what came by Jesus Christ himself.

XI. These things follow naturally and clearly from what was formerly delivered concerning *Antonia Bourignon*; but then they are of that importance, that none, but Madmen and Fools, will admit either the Premisses or Consequence without sufficient Evidence and Authority. For, if the things that are said be not true; if there be more ascribed to Madamoiselle *Bourignon* than what ought to be, then to pay her such Honour, Respect, and Esteem would be abominable Idolatry and horrid Blasphemy: If she require it, she is an Impostor, a Messenger from Satan, the Organ and Instrument of the Devil, whereby he designs to seduce the Simple and Unwary; She is not the true Light to be followed, but an *Ignis fatuus*, a false and dangerous appearance, to be carefully avoided by all who love and seek their own safety; and they who proclaim such high things of her are false Prophets; if they believe sincerely what they say, they are sadly infatuated and deluded; and if otherwise, they are monstrously and egregiously Wicked: if they be right, we cannot so much as give this Woman one Contradiction, without betraying our Conscience, as M. *de Cort* speaks: But if they do not speak the Truth, then if we hearken unto them, we receive those who speak in the Name of the Lord falsely, and we shall provoke God's Wrath and Jealousie,

Pref p. 47.

Jealouſie, by the grievous offence of giving Divine Honour to another.

It therefore highly concerns us what part we ought to take in this Matter, whether we ought to admit theſe Men and their Teſtimony, or if we ſhould reject them. And indeed, whatever reſpect be due to theſe Gentlemen, I crave leave to ſay, that the Matter in hand is of greater weight, than to be ſupported merely by their Authority; nor can their Teſtimony be judged ſufficient to receive *Antonia Bourignon* for ſuch a Woman as they have deſcribed her. I will not reflect upon their Honeſty, nor will I deny Integrity to ſome of them: Nay, I will eaſily grant that all of them may ſpeak as they think, and that they have written theſe things of this Woman from no other Motive than the ſincerity of their own Perſwaſions. But what then? This cannot reaſonably decide the caſe: Nor can we, without a moſt culpable raſhneſs, join iſſue with them, until we examine the Grounds of their Belief, and ſee their Reaſons why they come to be ſo and ſo perſwaded. Every one that is Honeſt, is not alſo Wiſe and Knowing: Nor are all infallible who may be numbered amongſt the Wiſe and Learned. Good Men may be miſtaken; nor are well meaning Perſons ſecure from being deceived and impoſed upon: Nay, not only the Simple and Ignorant are liable to be ſeduced, but alſo Men of Underſtanding, Learning, and Knowledge, of which many Inſtances may be brought both out of Ancient and Modern Hiſtories. *Tertullian* was carried away by the Error of *Montanus*. Neither all the firſt, nor yet all the preſent followers of *Mahomet* ought to be reckoned Dunces or Deſigning Men: Nor were it Juſt to deprive all the XII.

Diſciples

Diſciples of *George Fox*, of Underſtanding and Sincerity; and yet he would not act wiſely nor conſcientiouſly who ſhould plead for theſe *Impoſtors*, and juſtifie their Errors and Deluſions, becauſe ſome in other things of Sence and Judgment, have taken part with them. None indeed, but wicked Men and Villains will ſtudy a Cheat, and endeavour to impoſe upon the World that which they know and believe to be falſe: But how often have we ſeen and known Perſons ſeduced and drawn into ſuch helliſh Deſigns, who ought not to be branded with ſuch odious Characters; though at the ſame time I cannot but ſay, that whatever reaſon there may be to excuſe their Sincerity, there is all the reaſon in the World to cenſure their Judgment, Diſcretion and Conduct; for who does not act wiſely and cautiouſly, can never be ſaid to act innocently, though he may not be ſo culpable as others.

As no Man loves to be cheated in any thing, ſo no Man ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be cheated in Religion and Meſſages from Heaven; for they are Matters of the higheſt Importance, and therefore our Sentiments about them ſhould be built upon ſome ſure Foundation: without ſome reaſonable Conviction, without ſome Evidence which may ſatisfie Sober Men, and which may be defended when required and called in Queſtion, we ought not to receive *Doctrines*, nor embrace particular Syſtems of Religion, nor ſhould we cloſe with this or that Method of Salvation, otherwiſe we are ſhamefully lazy, negligent and eaſie in things which do moſt concern us. 'Tis true, the generality of the World practiſe the contrary, they take theſe things upon truſt, and are ſatisfied with that which is firſt propoſed,

and

and which lie neareſt them: But this is a Reproach to Mankind, nor can there be a greater inſtance of the Corruption of Humane Nature, than this, that Men uſe their Reaſon leaſt in things of greateſt moment. However we are not to conſider what is commonly done, but what ſhould be done; what is fit to be done by wiſe and good Men, by ſuch as would build their preſent Peace and Comfort, and their eternal Intereſt, not upon Sand, but upon a Rock which can hold out againſt Storms and Tempeſts.

Now, if in ſuch caſes a reaſonable Conviction, a ſatisfying Evidence be neceſſary, then to receive Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* as one ſo highly dignified by God, and her Scheme of Religion and Syſtem of Opinions as Divine, and abſolutely neceſſary to be followed, we ought to have ſomething more than the Authority and Teſtimony of thoſe Men formerly quoted: for whatever their Morals be, they are fallible as others; if they will not wilfully deceive, yet they are liable to be deceived; and if they have been impoſed upon, where are we if we follow them. The Teſtimony of Men is only valuable ſo far as they are competent Judges of the things which they declare: It is unjuſt to deny the Teſtimony of ſincere honeſt Men, when they bear witneſs only to Matters of Fact, to things which they have heard and ſeen; but when it comes to Opinions, Perſwaſions and Sentiments, both good and wiſe Men ought to be ſubmitted to a Tryal and Examination, whether there be Reaſons for their Belief. Now the Caſe before us, is of the Nature of the laſt; that is, It is not a Matter of Fact, but a Matter of Faith and Opinion; and therefore we muſt be allowed to judge the Validity of the Reaſons of

theſe

these Mens Sentiments of *Antonia Bourignon*, before we can or ought to be of their Side: And I am confident, that if their Reasons be weighed in the Balance, if they be put into just and equal Scales, they will be found light, and wanting Weight to make them pass for the Value which is put upon them.

XIII. I will not conceal any of their Reasons, nor will I misrepresent them. I do not remember to have met with any besides those which follow, which have been suggested and which may be gathered from what has been said above. 1. An Early and Extraordinary Sanctity. 2. The secret Knowledge of Mens Thoughts. 3. Foretelling things to come. 4. A Sublime and Wonderful Knowledge of Divine Mysteries, with an Uniformity and Agreement of Sentiments both with her self and Scripture. 5. The Supernatural Means and Method of her coming to the Knowledge of all these things, *viz.* without Reading, without consulting Men or Books, and without Meditation. 6. The apparition of Comets at her Birth, when she began to Write, and at her Death. From these Reasons they conclude that she was Divinely Inspired, and sent to the World upon some great Design; and for these Reasons they make her the Woman in the Revelation who was cloathed with the Sun, and had the Moon under her Feet, they call her *the Spouse of Christ*, and give her that large Character which we have seen above.

I intend to consider these Reasons calmly and impartially. First, whether supposing them true, the Consequence drawn from them be just and necessary, and then what truth is in them.

XIV. I begin with the First, *viz.* her Early and Extraordinary Sanctity. And I do acknowledge that true

Sanctity

Sanctity is only from God. It is not the work of Nature but of Grace; No Man can be perfectly Holy of himſelf, nor can the Devil either intend or effectuate ſuch a thing; if therefore any have the Gift of Sanctity, they have it from above, God certainly is the Author of it, whoſe Spirit only can ſubdue our Natural Corruption, and raiſe us to a Conformity to the Divine Nature. And as this Gift is of God, ſo it is more valuable than the Gift of Miracles, Prophecies, ſpeaking with divers Tongues, and ſuch like; for it is a greater ſign of the love of God, and does better ſecure an Intereſt in him. When our Lord beſtowed the Power of Miracles and of caſting out Devils upon the Seventy Diſciples, that they might not overvalue this Special Privilege or boaſt too highly of it, he ſaid unto them, *Notwithſtanding in this rejoyce not, that the Spirits are ſubject unto you, but rather rejoyce, becauſe your names are written in Heaven.* Now all who are truly holy have their Names written there: Many who have Propheſied, and caſt out Devils, and done many wonderful Works, ſhall be diſowned in the great Day of the Lord; they ſhall be commanded to Depart from Chriſt our Saviour; but they who are truly ſanctified, will never be ſeparated from him, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven for ever. Luk. 10. 20.

But though Sanctity be a great and moſt deſirable token of God's Love and Favour, yet it is not always attended with extraordinary Illuminations and Inſpirations: It may be without theſe, and theſe may be ſeparated from it. Good and Holy Perſons in the other World ſhall have a full and clear Viſion of all things, then they ſhall underſtand the Intricacies of Providence, and the Secrets of the Divine

Counſel; then they ſhall *ſee God as he is, and know even as they are known:* But at preſent the beſt and moſt Holy ſee as through a Glaſs darkly, and are ignorant of many things, as well as others; nay, perſons very good and holy, and very dear to God, may not know ſo much as ſome that are wicked and unſanctified. What St. *Paul* ſuppoſeth, may be proved by ſeveral Inſtances, that one may have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge, and yet be without Holineſs; for if they may want Charity, they want a ſpecial part of Holineſs. Wherefore ſuppoſe we ſhould grant Sanctity to *Antonia Bourignon*, ſuppoſe her to be truly and extraordinarily Holy; yet ſhe is not therefore to be reckoned Infallible, nor endued with all Knowledge, nor are her Doctrines to be received Implicitly. Let her Sanctity be never ſo great, yet that alone doth not raiſe her to the Station and Dignity of a Prophet, at whoſe Mouth the Church, and all particular Perſons, ſhould receive the Law and Will of God; for though Holineſs doth certainly not only diſpoſePerſons to receive ſpecial Influences of the Spirit of God, but alſo give a deeper Sence of Divine Truths than Reading, even as Practice in any Art doth make one Wiſer and more Skilful than Speculation; yet every Holy Perſon muſt not pretend a Revelation of all particulars, or to know the Mind of God in every thing: Wherefore we find St. *Paul* diſtinguiſhing warily what was his own Judgment, from what he had certainly from God. Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* might be Holy, and yet no Infallible Oracle.

And there is yet far leſs reaſon upon this account to entitle her the peculiar Organ of the Holy Ghoſt, the Singular Spouſe of Chriſt, the Queen of Heaven, the

the Mother of the Faithful, and the like: For though Saints be dear unto God, and very precious in his ſight; though he has prepared for them *things which Eyes have not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of Man*; though they receive ſecret Favours and Communications, which none knoweth neither can underſtand, ſave he who receiveth them; yet they themſelves ſhould keep ſtill the diſtance of Creatures, and cloth themſelves with Humility, and acknowledge their Unworthineſs: And others when they honour them, ſhould beware of running into Exceſs; they ſhould not exalt them unto an Equality with God, nor yet unto Degrees which approach near to it; for this is to Deify Creatures, which as it is fooliſh, ſo it is very provoking. 'Tis true, God beſtoweth, in the Scripture, upon Saints great and glorious Epithets, which are moſt worthy of our Contemplation, becauſe they declare the Greatneſs of God's Love: but alſo we may perceive that the Saints were both aſhamed and afraid to receive them, from the ſence of their unworthineſs and infinite diſtance from God. Humility is the foundation of true and perfect Sanctity, and it teacheth neither to reject or deſpiſe the free Expreſſions of that great Love, with which God is pleas'd to honour his Servants, nor yet to claim and enhance them by way of merit. For any to arrogate theſe Divine Honours as peculiarly belonging to them, is intolerable Pride; as it is high Preſumption and Inſolency for any to take upon them to give or appropriate theſe unto others, without ſpecial Command and Direction: For the giving of Honours is an Act of Soveraignty, and appertains to God, and not unto Men. The Saints in Scripture, ſhewed the greateſt Humility when God

magnified them moſt, and they uſed to ſpeak of one another with great Modeſty. The affecting of great Names and Titles proceeds from Pride and Vanity, and none but raſh, inconſiderate and unthinking Perſons will beſtow them laviſhly.

High Encomiums are the Effects of a ſtrong, fervent, and intereſs'd Paſſion, and not the Product of a ſolid Judgment. We ought, indeed, to praiſe famous Men, according to the Exhortation of the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, that others may be excited to imitate them; but then our Praiſes ſhould be juſt and true, modeſt and proper, ſuitable to the preſent Condition of Mankind, which is frail and mortal, and liable to many weakneſſes. We ought to praiſe Men, but we ſhould alſo remember that they are Men, and not magnifie them above what they are, or make Gods of them. I do not know which is more Criminal or more to be cenſured, whether the detracting from ones juſt Praiſe, or the giving extravagant and exceſſive Commendations: perhaps more may be ſaid againſt this. It has many pernicious Conſequences, and does proceed from the ſame partial Spirit, which regards Humour and Intereſt, more than Truth or Juſtice: both are reproved and condemned in Scripture, and the one as well as the other, is very unbecoming the Spirit of the Goſpel, which requires us not to reſt in the Admiration of the Perſons of Men, or of any Creature, but to carry our Thoughts from theſe up towards God, who alone is worthy to be admired and praiſed, and who is the Author of all the good that is in any.

Eccluſ. 44. 1.

There ought, indeed, to be a Cognizance of the Divine Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs, Mercy and Grace which are manifeſted in any, or towards any; we ought

ought alſo to honour thoſe, whom God has honoured thus, yet only ſo as to make them the Subject Matter of praiſing and honouring God. But we make Idols of Men, when we either aſcribe to them Perfections which they never had, or fix upon their perſonal Qualifications, and conſider their Virtues as theirs, without looking higher. This was a great part of Heatheniſm, and from hence ſprung that abominable Idolatry which the World was ſo full of: Immoderate Flattery of Mens Perſons, was the occaſion of it. To prevent which among Jews and Chriſtians, the infinite Wiſdom of God did and doth ſtill repreſent thoſe worthy Perſons he made uſe of, as Men, that is, as Perſons of the like Paſſions and Infirmities with other Men: The meaneſt of the Prophets or Apoſtles were greater by far than the Gods whom the Gentiles worſhipp'd, and yet that Divine Honour might not be paid to them, that they might not be adored as Gods, as Originals of their own Virtues and Qualifications, their Failings and Weakneſſes are not concealed, but expoſed to the View of all the World; they ſhewed themſelves Earthen Veſſels while they manifeſted the heavenly Treaſures of Wiſdom and Power committed to them, that the Praiſe may be unto God, and not unto Men. God is a Jealous God, and is not pleas'd, when the Glory which is due to himſelf is given either in whole or in part to another: which may be done without offering Sacrifice, or burning Incenſe, or making Prayers; for this is done by an exceſſive Admiration of any ones Perſon, by thinking of them above what we ought to think, by aſcribing to them much more than is due, and expecting from them that which God only can be the Author of. Upon this account

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we accuſe the Church of *Rome* of Idolatry towards the Virgin *Mary*, and other Saints, becauſe ſhe raiſeth and honoureth them above the Rank and Condition of Creatures: And yet neither the Virgin, nor any other pretended or real Saint is ſo much honoured by that Church, as Madamoiſelle *Antonia Bourignon* is by Monſieur *de Cort*, Monſieur *Poiret*, and their Followers. There have been Publiſhed ſeveral Blaſphemous Encomiums of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, but they are all ſhort of that which has been ſaid above of this Woman: and therefore I can be bold to ſay, that the *Bourignianiſts* are at leaſt in this as much guilty of Idolatry as the Church of *Rome*; nor can they ever juſtifie themſelves, without proving that ſhe is no Creature, but a God or Goddeſs. Her Sanctity will not excuſe them, be it never ſo great or unſpotted; nor though it would, is her Sanctity ſo great as is pretended. Which is the next thing I intend to ſhew.

XV. It may look a little Invidious to go about to leſſen the Reputation of another, and I have always conſider'd them as ſordid Souls, like Swine, who take Pleaſure in raking up the Faults of others: But as in ſome caſes there is reaſon for it, ſo here it is neceſſary for curing the dangerous Deluſions of ſome, and for ſecuring others from the like Contagion. Truth muſt be always preferr'd to Perſons.

If the fond Favorites of Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* had only repreſented her as a Devout Religious and Virtuous Woman, it might have paſſed; if they had only propos'd her as a good Pattern, how one may eſcape the Pollutions of the World, and be good and upright even in a Corrupt Age, none could have found Fault with them, nor was there reaſon for Strangers

gers to ſuſpect the Truth of what they ſay. But they have betrayed themſelves by an Extravagant Immodeſty, and their Truth and Sincerity may be juſtly queſtioned now that they aſcribe to her more than what is poſſible, if we look upon their Character by the Light of the Scripture. For they make her Impeccable, at leaſt they ſay, (as was ſhewed above) that ſhe never actually ſinned, no, not in Thought, and that ſhe derived no Guilt or Corruption from *Adam*, which muſt be Monſieur *de Cort* his meaning when he ſaid, that *it ſeemed* Adam *never ſinn'd in her*. Whereas the Scripture ſaith that we are born in Sin and conceived in Iniquity; that *there is no man, not the moſt juſt and perfect, that doth good and ſinneth not*; and that none are perfectly righteous in the ſight of God, but all are guilty before him. If Monſieur *de Cort* and Monſieur *Poiret* their Deſcription of *Antonia Bourignon* be true, ſhe did not as St. *Paul* ſpeaketh in the Name of the reſt of Mankind, carry about with her a Body of Sin and Death, ſhe had not *a Law in her Members warring againſt the Law of her Mind*; ſhe needed no High Prieſt, nor Sacrifice for Sin, and the Blood of Chriſt would be applied to her in vain, for ſhe is clean without it. If Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* was the Woman which they repreſent her, ſhe was indeed a very great Miracle, yea, the greateſt Wonder amongſt Mankind, for ſhe was the Offspring of ſinful and unclean Parents, and yet clean her ſelf; ſhe was born of Fleſh, and yet no Fleſh, or without the Natural and Inherent Properties of Fleſh, and ſo ſhe or they give the lye, not only to *Job*, who ſaid, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one*; but alſo to our Lord himſelf, who ſaid poſitively, *That which is born of the fleſh*

Pſ. 51. 5.
1 K. 8. 46.

Job 14. 4.
Joh. 3. 6.
1 Joh. 1. 8.

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is fleſh. But ſhall a *De Cort* or a *Poiret*, have more Credit than the Son of God? Should their words be received in Contradiction to the Scripture, which we know was given by Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt? what Impudence is it in them to impoſe ſuch notorious Falſhoods upon us? or how ſtrangely are they infatuated if they believe themſelves? Both he that ſaith of himſelf, that he hath no Sin, and he that
1 Joh. 1. 8. ſaith that another is without Sin, *is deceived and the truth is not in them.* This one Inſtance, as well as many others which follow, doth ſufficiently prove that the Infallible Spirit of God has not guided the Pens of Monſieur *de Cort*, or Monſieur *Poiret*: and that though they pretend to be the trueſt and moſt perfect Chriſtians, becauſe Followers of *Bourignon*; yet it is much more probable that they belong to that Party, which the Apoſtle St. *Jude* deſcribes,
Jude 16. which he makes *ſpots in the Chriſtian feaſts of Charity, whoſe mouth ſpeaketh great ſwelling words, having mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage. Antonia Bourignon*, was either Mother or Midwife to ſome wild Metaphyſical Whimſies, and Extravagant Notions, which Monſieur *Poiret* is paſſionately fond of, and therefore to make them be received by all for Divine Truths, ſhe muſt be exalted above the preſent State and Capacity of Humane Nature. Lord, how doth paſſion Blind Men! How do their Affections tranſport them without all bounds of Senſe and Diſcretion?

XVI. But it will perhaps be replied by the *Poiretans* and *Bourignianiſts*, that there is no reaſoning againſt Matter of Fact, that a thing may be true, though it be ſtrange and unaccountable; that Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* is an extraordinary Inſtance, and an Exception from the

the General State of Mankind. And therefore I proceed further to shew, First, That the things instanced by them, which they insist most upon, and which they talk most of, are not certain Proofs of Sanctity. Secondly, That several things are own'd both by her self and them, which are very inconsistent with such extraordinary Sanctity as is ascribed to her.

First, I say, that the things instanced, are not certain Proofs of Sanctity. By certain Proofs I do not mean strict Demonstrations, such as the Science of Mathematicks requires and doth afford; but such good Moral Assurances as may be the Ground of a reasonable Belief, and which may satisfie that we are not deceived and imposed upon. The present case differs very much from that of judging and censuring the Lives and Actions of our fellow Christians, who pretend to nothing extraordinary; there, a strict Enquiry is not necessary; there, Charity should bear the sway; and then we ought to believe and hope the best, providing we do not destroy the Notions of Good and Evil, nor yet recommend an evil Action out of an excess of Charity: But here, where there are more than common Pretensions, where an extraordinary Sanctity is pretended, a Sanctity worthy to be observed and imitated, a Sanctity which is thought sufficient to make the Person worthy to be received as a Prophet, as one sent from God to give great Light and Instruction both by Doctrine and Example; then every prudent Person ought to make a narrow Enquiry, and to judge warily; then we should ask for good and sufficient Evidence, and without it, we have all reason to suspend our Belief, and to deny our Assent. Now I do ingenuously declare, XVII.

That having considered seriously both what *Antonia Bourignon* writes of her self, and the Accounts which others have given of her, I do not perceive any singular or extraordinary Instance of Sanctity, besides affected Solitude and Retirement, her Celibacy and resisting all Importunities to Marriage, Fastings, Watchings, Humiliations, wearing of Sack-cloth, a contempt of the common Ornaments of her Sex, and such like Austerities; as also great Raptures and Extasies in Prayer and Devotion: none of which are certain signs of true and solid Piety; for as these things may, and do sometimes proceed from the right Knowledge of God, a sincere Love to him, and a serious Consideration of our own Nature, and the Nature of other things; so they may be and often are only the Effects of a particular Temper and Constitution, as they may be, and often have been counterfeited by Persons *in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of Iniquity.*

These things make a great shew, which both surprizes unthinking Beholders, and also deludes the Persons themselves; but they deserve not to be admired or praised, except when they are transacted by Persons of sound and solid Judgment, whose sence and understanding are under no suspicion of being Sick, and when they are accompanied with a Spirit of great Humility and Submission towards God, of Meekness and Charity towards others; when there is a sincere respect had to all God's Commands, and suitable Honour and Obedience paid unto Men. But when these things are done by one that is continually a quarrelling with Providence and the state of Humane Affairs, by one that is vain, proud and censorious, full of himself, and who has no esteem for others;

others; who observes no distance, neither pays any respect to other Mens outward Dignities or Moral Endowments; who is above all Advice and Counsel; who pretends a Privilege from Obedience, and a Right to Command; then I say these things are to be suspected and slighted deservedly; then we may, without uncharitableness, conclude that they are done out of some sinistrous Design, or that they are the Effects of a melancholy Head, or crazy Brain, or of some surly, peevish predominant Humour.

How many Instances may be given of the long Fastings and Watchings, of rigid and severe acts of Mortification performed both by Hypocrites and Fools? How often have both Madmen and Wicked seemed to be transported strangely in the Exercises of Devotion? therefore these things are not certain Signs, nor sufficient Proofs of true solid Sanctity: Which consists in the Rectitude of the whole Man, in a sincere Conformity of our inward Thoughts and Sentiments, and of our outward Actions to the Will of God, manifested to us by Reason and Revelation. And therefore also we have no reason to take them for Divinely inspired, who mistake the Nature of Sanctity, who take fallible Signs and uncertain Appearances for sure Demonstrations.

See *Causabon* his Treatise of *Enthusiasme*, and *Burton* of *Religious Melancholy*.

Antonia Bourignon is often represented as having as much Evidence from Heaven as Jesus Christ had. I think the Comparison not only odious but impious; nor is there the least ground to make it: yet we are obliged to consider it, for detecting and curing the strange Delusions of this Party. Sure, his Sanctity was infinitely more evident than hers, none that hath either Eyes or Judgment, and are unbyas'd, can pretend any true or real Resemblance. His Sanctity XVIII.

was constant, and did shine with such a convincing Lustre, that no place is left for doubting it. He indeed made no vain ostentation of great Austerities, he did not amuse People by severe and unimitable acts of Mortification; He wisely avoided these himself, nor would he enjoin them to his Disciples, because he knew the superstitious humour of Mankind, how fond they are of an External Religion, how much inclin'd to be Bigot for things of an Indifferent Nature, rather than to love and esteem that which is really Good, and how ready to make atonement for the Sins of their Soul by the Exercises of their Body; and therefore he would not give any Example which might confirm their Errors, and encourage them in their Delusions: But he gave Instances of a true and perfect Sanctity, a Sanctity which cannot be contradicted, a Sanctity against which no shadow of Objection can be framed, either on the account of Deficiency or Redundancy. None but God can see the Heart of Man, but the Heart may be known by the Actions, and that the Heart of Jesus was Right, that it was full of the Love of God and wholly intent upon the pleasing him, is evident to a Demonstration, by his chearful complyance with the Will of God in every thing, whether it was to do or suffer; He embraced all Opportunities of shewing Zeal for God, and he went up and down continually doing good unto Men, never wearying in either, whatever Difficulties, Discouragements and Provocations he met with; He wanted no Virtue, and exerted every one in the most perfect manner, neither over-acting any thing, nor yet being defective in any thing; His Life was so perfect, his Words and Actions so conform to Truth, so well adjusted to the Occasion,

Occaſion, to the Time, Place, and other Circumſtances, that Divine and Infinite Wiſdom is not more diſcernible in the Creation, Contrivance and Harmony of the Material World, than in the Life and Actions of Jeſus Chriſt, and therefore we are ſure that both proceeded from one and the ſame Almighty, moſt Wiſe, and moſt Holy Spirit; for as the Inviſible Things of God, his Eternal Power and Godhead, are clearly ſeen by the one; ſo from the other, it is demonſtrable that the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Jeſus Chriſt: for ſo great an Effect could not be produced by any leſs Cauſe, nor could ſuch exact Sanctity, ſuch perfect Holineſs, proceed from any meer Man. The moſt inſpired Prophet was Inferiour to him, and though this Holy Jeſus has had, and I hope ſtill hath, many ſincere Followers, yet never any was, neither can any be ſo perfect, ſo holy as he was: for his Holineſs will exceed others, as much as the Works of Nature are beyond thoſe of the moſt perfect Art. And there is as much, nay more foundation for a Parallel between the Actions of a Bedlamite and the even Tract of a moſt wiſe and virtuous Man, than for a juſt Compariſon of the Sanctity of *Antonia Bourignon* to that of Jeſus Chriſt. His Sanctity, like all the Works of God, will be found the more perfect and more admirable, the more narrowly it is examined and conſidered; whereas the Sanctity of Madamoiſelle *Bourignon*, and all other (eſpecially Enthuſiaſtical or Conceited Perſons) ſhews beſt at a diſtance: for if we view them near, they appear very defective, and wanting ſeveral ſtroaks to give them a true reſemblance to Jeſus Chriſt, who is the only Model and Standard of perfect Sanctity, whoſe Life ought to be ſtudied with great attention, both for

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getting right Notions of Sanctity, and also for facilitating the attainment of it. Others are to be followed only so far as they are Followers of him; and we may assure our selves that nothing is an essential part of Sanctity, or a necessary Demonstration of it, but that which he practised: for as he declared all the Counsel of God concerning us, so he gave us an Example of every thing that is absolutely good or necessary to Eternal Life.

XIX. Serm. XV. *On* 1 Tim. 5. 23.

I will not transcribe here, that which I have delivered elsewhere about Corporal Austerities; nor will I at present enter upon the Examination of Raptures, Extasies and Visions, which are given as signs of the extraordinary Sanctity of *Antonia Bourignon*, because I may have hereafter a more proper occasion for this: But before I pass to another Head, I judge it may be of use, to speak more particularly of Solitude, and a Total retreat from the World, which is recommended as a Special Act of Sanctity, by the Example and Sentiments of *Antonia Bourignon*, and which others also, besides her Followers, seem to be exceedingly taken with.

Whether the Preference should be given to an *Active*, or to a *Contemplative Life*, has been much debated both by Heathens and Christians, and also by Ancients and Moderns: And I must say, that very few have offered a just Decision of the Matter; for the Advocates of either side, as generally those who manage Law Suits, have endeavoured to shew Wit rather than Truth, and the Judges have passed Sentence by Inclination or Interest, more than from the serious Consideration of the Nature of the Thing. Sanguine Persons have favoured the Active Life, as the Contemplative has been preferred by those that

that are Melancholy: Men have been in love with Publick Employment, when things ſucceeded according to their Mind; but when they went croſs, then they turn'd peeviſh, and only admired Solitude. *Charles* the Fifth was ſenſible of the declining of his Affairs, and did foreſee a change of his Fortune, before he thought of changing an Imperial Crown and Palace with a Monaſtery, or of preferring the Pleaſures of Retirement to the Privilege of Supreme Authority and Command.

But to come cloſe to the Point, I ſay, nothing is more diſſerviceable to Religion, or more prejudicial to Mens Peace and Comfort, than the confining Religion to a life of Solitude and Retirement. The appropriating the Name of Religion to Cloiſters and Monaſteries, as the Church of *Rome* hath done, is Unjuſt, it is Inſolent and Scandalous, and is the Cauſe of much Miſchief. It renders ſerious and well-diſpos'd Souls ſad and melancholly when they cannot enter into that State, which is repreſented as neceſſary or highly expedient for their Perfection or Salvation; and it frightens and diſcourages others from the Practice of Piety and the ſerious obſervation of Religious Duties, upon the opinion that they are only proper for ſuch as are Cloiſter'd and retired out of the World. The Providence of God has ingaged the generality of the World in an active Life, and made it impoſſible for them to retire from Trade and Buſineſs; ſhall we therefore ſay that by the Providence of God, it is impoſſible for the greateſt part of Mankind to be Religious? that all whoſe Neceſſity and Circumſtances involve them into Publick Employment, or the Affairs of the World, are exempted from the Obligations of Religion and a good Con-

ſcience?

ſcience? 'Tis true the Soul is better than the World, and one had better forfeit this than loſe that. But who has Authority to impoſe harder Conditions than God has done? Does he require that all ſhould be Monks or Hermits, that there ſhould be no fellowſhip or Society kept up, nor buſineſs done. He has indeed Commanded not to love the World inordinately, not to ſet our Affections upon it, not to be Covetous, nor anxious about the things of this Life: but neither theſe, nor any other Command, make Trade, Commerce, or negotiating the Affairs of the World unlawful; nor do they imply that a Contemplative Life, or Total Retreat from the World is more Religious, than Buſineſs or Worldly Employments. God may be ſerved the one way as well as the other; and a Man of Buſineſs, who manages his Affairs with Diſcretion, by the rules of Juſtice and Equity, without Covetouſneſs, without ſordid and ſiniſtrous Dealing, keeping a Conſcience void of offence towards God and Man, and who regards the other Life which is not ſeen, as well as the preſent which is ſeen; I ſay, This Man is really as Devout and Religious as any Monk or Hermit, or retired Perſon can be. *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Lot*, *Hezekiah*, and ſeveral others mentioned in Scripture were ſuch, and they are more worthy Examples, than any which can be produced from amongſt either the Ancient or Modern *Aſceticks*, *Anchorets*, or *Cœnobites*. Nay, I ſay further, That the *Antonies* and *Tereſaes*, the *Brunoes* and *Catherines*, the Founders and Obſervers of the ſtricteſt *Orders*, are not only ſhort of thoſe eminent Examples which the Spirit of God has thought worthy to be put upon Sacred Record; but alſo, that they have not exerted greater

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or more ſincere Piety, than many others who negotiated Buſineſs, and converſed freely in the World: Nor were their voluntary Penances and Auſterities, ſuch Acts and Inſtances of Humility, Patience, Self-denial, contempt of Honour and Eſteem, as the bearing the Inſults and Impertinencies, the Follies and Indiſcretions, the Slights and Affronts, which daily Converſation expoſes one to.

And here I cannot paſs over a vulgar Error concerning the Clergy, which is, That they all ought to be Men of Study and Retirement. Indeed, they ought not to undertake Imployments which are below the Dignity of their Character, nor ſhould they intangle themſelves ſo much in Affairs, or engage in any ſuch Buſineſs as may take them off from the exerciſe of their Function, or which may hinder them from purſuing the Ends of their Sacred Calling: And therefore by the ancient Canons it was not lawful for a Clergyman to be ſo much as a Tutor or Guardian, or the Executor of any one's Will and Teſtament, becauſe all theſe were Incumbrances to the Work of the Miniſtry. But yet it is a Miſtake to think that they ſhould never be ſeen out of their Cloſets, or only when they are to Preach or Read Prayers; for their Buſineſs is not only to Preach, but to be *an example of the Believers, in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity*; which they cannot be if they be wholly abſtracted and retired from the World, for then they put their Candle under a Buſhel, which cannot give light to the Houſe. As in the Pulpit they teach the Neceſſity of the Divine Laws, ſo by their Practice they ſhould ſhew the poſſibility of them: And he who can entertain Converſation innocently, walking by the Faith

VI. Can. Apoſt. III. Can. Con. *Chalced.* Novel. Juſt. 123.

1 Tim. 4. 12.

which he Profeſſes, and the Doctrine which he publickly teaches; who, as the occaſion requires it, can be Serious without Melancholy, or Chearful without being Prophane; who can hear himſelf praiſed without Vanity, and accuſed without wrath, who can accept good things when they are offered without Scruple or brutal Joy, and yet never out of humour when they are wanting; and who can frame both his Diſcourſe and Actions, ſo as to make them ſuitable to the times and the preſent State of the Church, his own Circumſtances, and the Circumſtances of his Company, I ſay, he who can do all this, doth anſwer his Character, and doth proſecute the ends of his Calling better than he who ſhuts himſelf intirely up; and his Converſation does more good, and does more promote Piety than the others Contemplation and Study.

But to Return. True Religion and Piety do agree with an Active Life as well as the Contemplative; and one who converſes daily in the World, may be as devout and may ſerve God as faithfully as he who is totally ſequeſtred from it; therefore *John Baptiſt* did not adviſe the People, nor the Publicans, nor the Soldiers to abide with him in the Wilderneſs, or to lay down their ſeveral Imployments, but only gave them Rules, how they might follow them with Integrity and Uprightneſs towards God and Man. If all Religion conſiſted in Study and Contemplation, then every one who deſired to be Religious, ought to ſeek out Solitude and a retired life; but it is alſo the Will of God that every one do that Buſineſs which his Place and Station, his Neceſſity and Circumſtances, or the Duty which he owes unto others do require at his hands; and as this cannot be neglected without Injuſtice,

Injuſtice, ſo he who humbly ſubmits to it, and who patiently and chearfully undergoes the fatigue of it, not out of reſpect to worldly Gain and Profit, but becauſe it is the Will of God, and what his wiſe Providence calls him to, he doth give as great a Teſtimony of his love to God, as any who affects Solitude and Retirement: which deſerves to be well conſidered, eſpecially by all religious Wives and Servants, that out of a pretext of Devotion, as has been too often done, the one may not neglect the Service of their Maſters, nor the other the Affairs of their Husbands, and the Care of their Family and Children.

Further, as it is evident that Religion cannot be confined or annexed only to the Contemplative Life, or a State of Sequeſtration from the World; ſo neither muſt we think this State more perfect or more eligible than any other. Perfection is attainable by the Active as well as Contemplative Life; and the choice of either is to be juſtified only by the prudent conſideration of one's Natural Conſtitution, his outward State and Circumſtances, for neither of theſe are agreeable to all, or proper for all. Retirement may be very prudent and proper for ſome in ſome Caſes, and yet neither prudent nor commendable for others, nor for the ſame Perſons at other times; but may be conſtructed deſervedly an inſtance of unmanly Cowardice, and of a ſhameful deſertion of their Poſt. So that in my judgment neither of theſe States is to be preferred to the other; nor do they wiſely conſider them who preſume to determine abſolutely which is beſt, for the one or other is beſt according to one's perſonal State and Circumſtances or his Publick Ingagements. And I do alſo think that he is in the

happieſt Condition who partakes of both States, whoſe life is neither wholly Contemplative, nor wholly Active; but which is made up of both by the intermixture of Retirement and Buſineſs: For he that is wholly retired, lives only to himſelf, which makes him an idle Drone with regard to others, and he is a Drudge to the World who is always imployed in Buſineſs, and who neither has nor takes time to refreſh his Mind with the ſweet Pleaſures of Retirement. Solitude is more Profitable for one's ſelf, but Buſineſs and Converſation renders one more Uſeful to the World. In the one we enjoy our ſelves beſt, but it is only by the other that we can do any good, or manifeſt the Vertues and Graces which God hath beſtowed on us. By Solitude we acquire Knowledge, and by being converſant in the World we learn Experience: In Retirement we may more eaſily preſerve our Innocence, but without Converſation and Buſineſs we cannot exert Chriſtian Wiſdom and Courage, and other neceſſary Vertues. Solitude and Retirement are a ſafe Refuge for weak Conſtitutions; but they who are ſtrong, ſhould ſhew themſelves upon the Theatre of the World. A Religious Retreat is as neceſſary to the Spiritual, as Reſt is to the Bodily Life; for by it we renew our decayed Spirits, we recollect our diſſipated Thoughts, and add ſtrength and vigour to our wiſe Reſolutions, and pious Purpoſes. It is impoſſible that one can act wiſely, who never thinks ſeriouſly; or that he can think ſeriouſly and to purpoſe, who is always in the hurry of Affairs. Therefore certainly every one who conſults his own Good, and is in any wiſe Maſter of himſelf, will ſo wiſely contrive his buſineſs, and ſo order his affairs, that he may have Hours and Days,

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if not Weeks and Months for Meditation and Contemplation: That by this means he may have an intercourſe and acquaintance with Heaven, while he lives upon Earth; that he may be fortified againſt all Encounters, and be qualified for gaining that Victory over the World, which will give him a right to the Crown of Glory.

And I am of the opinion, that frequent retreats are more adviſeable to religious Perſons, than a conſtant or total ſequeſtration from the World. For ſuch is the weakneſs of our Minds, while they are clogg'd with this groſs Fleſh, that they cannot hold out long, without wearying, in thoſe divine and ſpiritual Exerciſes, for which Solitude and Retirement are to be deſired. If our Spirits be too much extended at once, they will flag, and will become no more capable of being elevated unto degrees of Fervour, than a tired and ſpent Body is of quick and vigorous Motion. Therefore the Devotions of Cloiſter'd Perſons are very often dry and inſipid, and they do frequently perform their Exerciſes with leſs taſt and ſatisfaction than Men in the World. If there be not care taken to preſerve thoſe devout and ſublime Thoughts which ſoar above material Things, and a ſublunary World, they will either quite evaporate, or they will condenſe into airy Notions, or fantaſtical Conceits; whence it is that Dreams and Viſions, and ſuch like Extravagancies, do happen unto Perſons altogether or very much abſtracted from the World, more than unto others. Religious Retirements are liable to be abuſed, and are ſometimes attended with dangerous Conſequences, as well as Converſation and Buſineſs; nor have Perſons who are entangled in the Affairs of the World more need of Monitors, than thoſe who have ſequeſtred themſelves, of wiſe Directors. All

All I shall add more upon this Head, is, That as the *Church of Rome* hath erred grossly, in chaining Religion so much to Monastries and Cloisters; so it was a great blemish in our Reformation, to demolish these Houses entirely, which as they ought to have been reformed from the abuses that had crept into them, so they might have been kept up to the advantage of Religion, and to the benefit of both the Publick, and particular Persons: They are very profitable, if the snare of Vows, and the delusion of a peculiar Sanctity in them be removed.

This Digression, about the nature of Solitude, and a Contemplative Life, is not altogether from our purpose; which is to shew the Mistakes of Enthusiastical Persons, who commonly are excessively fond of this state, and do ascribe more to it than it well deserves.

XX. But now to return to Madamoiselle *Bourignon*: As the chief Instances alledged are not certain Proofs of her Sanctity; so there be several things, which she her self confesses, and which they who write her Life do acknowledge, which do not very well agree with that extraordinary Sanctity that is ascribed to her. For,

First, We are told, That until the Eighteenth Year of her Age, she run into a vain, light and idle Conversation, and followed the Pleasures, Recreations and Divertisements of the World, by which she *lost her Conversation with God*, as the Author of the *Preface to the English Reader* saith; which, in my judgment, is a flat Contradiction to what he said some few lines before, *viz. That from her Childhood, she had inward Conversation with God.* It is, indeed, no strange thing to see Children and Youth taken with Vanities, when those

Light of the World, Pref. p. 14.

those of riper years do too much follow them: nor would there be reason to upbraid it here, if Madamoiselle *Bourignon* and her Disciples did not pretend that she was Sanctified from the Womb, and boast that at three or four years of age she was Divinely Inspired, and that even so early she began to express a sense of Divine Things above what all the Doctors of the Church are capable of. They will have her, when she was little more than a weaned Infant, to be sensible of Christian Perfection, and how much short of it those about her were: when she could hardly lisp out a word, it is pretended that she asked seriously whether there were any Christians, or Followers of Jesus, and where they lived? Now, if all this be true, and if these things had proceeded from the Spirit of God, to give early notice to the World, that He had anointed her to be a Prophetess, to declare his Will; I say, if so, it is no ways likely that God would have left her so soon to her self, or that he would have suffered her to be corrupted, whom he had appointed to be so great a Light. *Samuel*, *Jeremiah*, and St. *John Baptist*, who were consecrated Prophets from their birth, and who were set apart to be special and signal Instruments of a Reformation among God's People, they never turned aside to a wicked, vain, or light Conversation; all their Life was unspotted from the World, and from their very Infancy they were Examples of a severe Piety: But this New Light of the World suffered an eclipse for some years, though, as is pretended, it began to shine very early. The early impressions of Piety which *Antonia Bourignon* is said to have had, were for some time smothered; and she who is brought in, at four years of age, complaining of other Christians, did her self, when

La Vie Contin. C. 2.

when grown up, follow their vain Example. Which is not agreeable to the Methods of the Divine Oeconomy heretofore, if God had raiſed up this Woman, and called her out to ſo great and high things as She and her Followers alledge. It is ſaid of our Bleſſed Lord, that as he grew in Stature, ſo he did grow in Wiſdom, and Favour both with God and Man: And if God had deſigned Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* a ſecond Saviour to Mankind, to finiſh the Work which was only begun by the other; it is not at all to be believed that he would have given place to a Spirit of Folly and Vanity, or that he would have ſuffered her to commit ſuch things as were offenſive to himſelf, and contrary to his own Purpoſes; that is, which were ſo far from reclaiming Men from their Sins, that they rather tended to confirm them therein.

That which they ſay tempted her to this vain courſe of life, was the Cenſures and Miſconſtructions put upon her early Serioufneſs and Retirement; for upon that account, ſhe was repreſented as ſimple, melancholy, and wanting Spirit. But could not the Spirit of God break through this Temptation? Was her extraordinary Grace too weak to reſiſt it? Could one ſo Divinely Inſpired, find out no other means of rectifying Peoples Miſtakes? And muſt ſo holy a Perſon do evil, merely to paſs for a Wit? Is Senſe and Judgment no where to be manifeſted, but in the acts of a vain and trifling Converſation? But whatever was her motive and temptation, or however ſhe may be excuſed, ſhe confeſſes that ſhe was far engaged into the Vanities of the World, and the love of them: If we may believe her ſelf, *ſhe was ambitious of Honour, and did love the Pleaſures and Divertiſements of Senſe and Riches, becauſe they did procure them: She took plea-*

La Parole de Dieu, n. 3.

pleaſure in the company of Young Men, admitted their Courtſhip and Addreſſes, and was well pleaſed when they commended her Wit, and eſpecially when they praiſed her for being Handſom and Agreeable, becauſe ſhe had been called always Ugly, by her Mother. Thus it appears, that Pride and Ambition, Senſuality and Covetouſneſs prevailed with this Maid: and where theſe prevail, the Spirit of God does not much reſide. It is ſaid, indeed, That God did often viſit her even in this ſtate; *That he did not ceaſe, now and then, to awaken her, even in the midſt of her Divertiſements; but Company, and theſe Amuſements, ſtill got the aſcendant:* that is, in plain terms, ſhe all this time reſiſted the Spirit of God, and walked contrary to the Dictates of her Conſcience: *Videt meliora probatque, deteriora ſequitur.* Which is not compatible with a ſtate of extraordinary Grace and Sanctity. I would not exaggerate this ſo much, if I was not provoked by the ſtrange Impudence and Deluſion of thoſe, who will have us to receive this Woman, as more than Humane, as without Sin, as equal to Jeſus Chriſt, who never yielded to the ſtrong Temptations of the Devil, whereas ſhe was carried away by the weak Perſuaſions of Men.

La Vie Exterieure, §. 4.

Light of the World, Pref. p. 14.

Again, As there appeared no extraordinary Sanctity in *Antonia Bourignon* before ſhe arrived to the age of Eighteen; ſo even after this, which is pretended to be the time of her Converſion, ſhe did not determine the great and important ſtate of her Life, by Motives and Principles of Religion. It is the End, which ſanctifies our Actions; and Perſons truly Devout and Holy, make God the End of all that they do. They who reſpect only or chiefly their own Eaſe, Pleaſure or Profit, are not to be reckon'd very holy, or above

the common rate of Mankind, whatever ſtate of Life they betake themſelves to: For the height of one's Sanctity is not to be taken from their Outward Quality and Behaviour, but from the Inward Principles which move them. He that is ſober only or mainly for ſaving of his Money, or on the account of bodily Health, doth indeed wiſely; but his Temperance is no more an act of Religion, than another's eating and drinking out of Pleaſure. He that retires from the World, becauſe he loves his Eaſe, and has an averſion to Trouble and Vexation, his Retirement is not Religious, nor is he himſelf to be eſteemed more holy than another who follows worldly Employments.

Now if Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* had been ſo extraordinary holy as is pretended, if ſhe had been Inſpired from Above in every thing, ſhe would have conſidered God, and not her ſelf; ſhe would have conſulted that which was beſt for his Service, and not her own Humour and Conveniency: But ſhe reſolv'd upon a Cœlibate State, only becauſe ſhe would not be croſs'd and uneaſie; becauſe ſhe hated the Reſtraints and Troubles of Marriage, though they be both the Occaſions and Proofs of great Virtue, which was no great Inſtance of any peculiar Sanctity. She did not chuſe a Virgins State, that ſhe might only *care for the things of the Lord*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, and not be incumbred in the doing that, by the Obligations of *pleaſing a Husband* too: But ſhe preferred this State to Marriage, only becauſe ſhe had no great or good opinion of the Husbands, who were offered to her, and becauſe ſhe was afraid that they might be all like her Father, who was ſometimes rough, ſurly and ill-natur'd towards her Mother.

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This is the Account which she gives her self. And he who continues her Life, according to his usual Custom, doth enlarge upon this Passage, and improves it to a great Act of Piety, not without a Reflection upon the rest of her Sex. When, 'saith he, 'she perceived her Father rough and unkind to her 'Mother, notwithstanding the Care and Pains which 'were taken to please him, she retired and prayed, '*That God might never suffer her to Marry.* A Prayer 'very unlike to that of St. *Augustine* before his Con'version, which was, *Lord give me the gift of Cha'stity, but not yet*; fearing to be too soon healed of 'the damnable and transient Charm of the Flesh. 'And yet (saith he) more will favour the Prayer of 'St. *Augustine*, than comply with the Prayer of Mada'moiselle *Bourignon*, which was so acceptable to God, 'that he granted to her the full Intent of it.

La Vie Ext. §. 6. p. 148.

La Vie Cont. c. 2. p. 20.

I leave it to the fair Sex, to make what Resentments they please upon this Author's plain Insinuation, that all of them have strong Inclinations to Marriage, that they do heartily wish for an Opportunity, and are guilty of gross Dissimulation, when they pretend the contrary: But whether this be true or not, and whatever Opinion this Man may have of Women upon this account, I do say, that those who embrace Marriage, may do it upon more Religious Motives and Principles than this *Idol Mistress* of his did refuse it, who did so, because she undervalued all she saw, and could find none of Merit enough to deserve her. *Antonia Bourignon*, like the rest who pretend to more than ordinary Sence and Spirit, was nice and difficultly pleas'd, Critical and Censorious, apt to be disgusted at the least blemish, whatever Virtues it might be compensated with; She, as others

who have a high conceit of themſelves, aim'd at ſomething above what is common, ſhe would have had a more perfect Creature than Nature uſes to produce, and a Husband with all Kinds and Degrees of Happineſs, which the preſent Oeconomy of the World will not allow: And 'twas a wonder that ſhe had not the common Fate of that Proud Gang, which is to take up with one at Fifty or Sixty, Inferiour to any of thoſe whom they ſlighted at Twenty and Thirty.

Thirdly, *Antonia Bourignon*, by the Account we have of her, ſeems to have been of a very obſtinate wilful Temper, neither reſpectful of thoſe who were Elder, nor tractable or obedient to thoſe, to whom God and Nature had ſubjected her: which is ſo far from being conſiſtent with true Sanctity, that it is a ſhrewd ſign that it is wanting. For where this Grace is given in any good meaſure, it corrects the ruggedneſs of our natural Conſtitution; it makes them who are naturally Stubborn, pliant and adviſable; It fills them with Reſpect and Eſteem towards others, and eſpecially, it renders them Obedient to Parents. So it is ſaid of him, who was a true Inſtance of moſt perfect Sanctity, That *he went down to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto his Parents.* But as for Madamoiſelle *Bourignon*, this wonderful Holy Maid, ſhe was croſs and refractory, ſhe would not obey her Parents in thoſe things, in which they had a right to command, and purſued her own will, not only contrary to their Inclinations, but alſo againſt their expreſs Commands. I could give ſeveral Inſtances, but one may ſerve, which was her Importunity to be admitted into the Cloiſter of the *Diſcalceated* or *Bare footed Carmelites*, even after her Father had moſt paſſionately declared againſt

Luke 2.51.

againſt it, ſaying, That *he would rather ſee her Dead, or a Clinick and Bed-rid all her life-time, than a Nun of any Order whatſoever.* And notwithſtanding that, he charged her ſtrictly to reſort no more to the Houſes of theſe Nuns, *threatning to break her Legs if ſhe did*; yet ſhe often went, and ſpoke to one Father *Lawrence*, who was *Prior*, to receive her without her Father's conſent; and when that would not do, ſhe ſtole away privately from her Father's Houſe, dreſs'd up like a Hermit, as ſhall be related hereafter. *La Parole de Dieu.* n. 8. p. 5. *La Vie Ext.* §. 6.

Perhaps the Defendants of this Woman will ſay, That this cannot be reckoned any Inſtance of Diſreſpect or Diſobedience to her Parents; becauſe ſhe did it not only from a Religious Principle, that in that condition ſhe might ſerve God better, but alſo by a particular Inſpiration, which ought not to have been reſiſted; for *it is better to obey God than Man.* But what! Is Religion inconſiſtent with it ſelf? doth it teach a Contempt of Parents! a breach of the firſt Command with Promiſe? Can a Violation of the Natural Right of Parents, be compenſated by a Nuns Hood and Habit? Is it not the expreſs Law of God, that the Vows of a Daughter ſhall not bind, unleſs ratified by her Father? 'Tis true, God has a Soveraign Authority over his own Laws, and all Perſons; Father and Mother muſt be forſaken and hated, when he requires it: But how does it appear that he gave ſuch a Command to this Maid? She ſays it, indeed, but is that ſufficient to believe it? have we not ſeen Bedlamites pretend the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, for moſt ridiculous things? muſt every whimſical Conceit of a diſturb'd Head, of an uneaſie and unſetled Mind be thought to come from God? When God

God gives extraordinary Commands, especially which seem to dispense with any of his former, he gives them with a convincing Evidence, and at the same time he inclines the Heart of such as have Power and Authority over those who receive particular Commands and Commissions, that they may either forward the Execution, or give no hindrance to it. Thus when God commanded *Moses* to go to *Egypt*, the Heart of *Jethro* his Father-in-Law, was moved to let him go in Peace, with his Wife and Children: And though God hardened *Pharoah*'s Heart for a time, that he might have occasion to exert his Soveraign Authority, to shew his Almighty Power, and to demonstrate to all the World, that he was the only true God; yet the People of *Israel* were not to move a foot towards their commanded Journey, until he was willing to let them go. Nor is there so much as one Instance in all the Scripture, of a Wife, or Child, or Servant, or Subject, their being commanded to do any thing of an Indifferent Nature, which is not absolutely and necessarily good, without any regard to the Consent and Approbation of Husband, Parent, Master, and King. If the Case had been about turning Christian, Madamoiselle *Bourignon* ought to have done it without a particular Revelation, whether her Father would or not; but 'twas not lawful for her, either to Marry, or to devote her self to a Cœlibate Life, against his Will or without his Consent: Therefore her obstinacy to be a *Carmelite Nun*, was inconsistent with true Sanctity, was not of God, but only a wilful humour from a suddain inconsiderate Whim which struck her fanciful Noddle at that time. If it had been of God, the Revelation would have been made plain to her Father, or by some secret Sugge-

stions

ſtions he would have been inclin'd to favour it. And it was evident afterwards, that either ſhe did not regard this pretended Revelation, or that 'twas not of God, for ſhe did not purſue it, when Father and Mother were Dead; when ſhe was at her own diſpoſal, ſhe neither engag'd her ſelf into that *Order*, or any other, but hated and abhorred all. She indeed went and ſtayed ſome time at *Mons*, with the *Nuns* of *Notre Dame* there; but they ſoon wearied of her and ſhe of them. But to go on,

I will give you a Fourth Inſtance, which all unbyaſs'd Perſons muſt acknowledge, very unſuitable to one of Extraordinary Sanctity; nay, which does not well agree with common meaſures of Grace and good Nature, becauſe it proceeded from an inordinate love of the World, and could not be managed without great diſreſpect to her Father. And this is her ſuing her Father at the Law, to divide his Goods with her, when he Married a Second time. *La Parole de Dieu*, n. 91. p. 62.

Monſieur *Bourignon*, upon his firſt Wife's death, employed ſome Prieſts and others who were moſt likely to prevail, that they might perſwade his Daughter *Antonia* to abide with him, and to take the charge of his Houſe and Family; which ſhe did with ſome difficulty, for her Mind was wholly upon Solitude and Retirement from worldly Buſineſs: though her Father's Neceſſity and Command ſhewed that it was the Will of God that ſhe ſhould at that time lead an Active Life, and the Revelation ought to have been very Evident, which could excuſe the not aſſiſting her Father when he wanted it ſo much; and therefore it was told her, that even Vows were diſpenſable in this Caſe. She ſays that ſhe manag'd the Affairs of her Father's Family very well, and alſo did take

time

time for *Interiour Retreats*; but her Father was not ſo pleaſed with her Management, as not to think of taking home a Wife, which he at laſt did; commanding his Daughter to deliver up to her the whole Charge of his Houſe. *Antonia* continued with her Father four Months longer, but without great Satisfaction either to her ſelf, or to her Father and his new Wife. As theſe Relations ſeldom agree well together, but are often picking Quarrels and finding Fault one with another; ſo it was here: Madamoiſelle eſteemed her *Mother-in-Law* a Fool, and had her in the utmoſt Contempt, which the other did not bear patiently, nor could the Father well ſuffer it. He was obliged to take his Wife's part, and not to countenance his Daughter, which made her very uneaſie; and at laſt to reſolve upon leaving the Houſe, which Monſieur *Bourignon* would neither encourage, nor yet hinder; but he flatly refuſed her Money, which did very much Pique her. And while ſhe was in this diſcontented humour, he who was Husband to her deceas'd Siſter, perſwaded her to commence a Law Suit againſt her Father. He himſelf was a Counſellor at Law, and no doubt for his own Profit, encourag'd this Proceſs, hoping to wheedle the ſimple Maid out of all, or a great part of what the Law might give her; but both he and ſhe was diſappointed at this time, for Monſieur *Bourignon* did caſt them: And, indeed, whatever Singularities were in the preſent caſe; which might give litigious Perſons a foundation for a Proceſs, it ſeems very unreaſonable to oblige a Father to beſtow a Portion on a Daughter before ſhe be Married, or has any particular occaſion for it, eſpecially when he is willing to keep and maintain her at home, if ſhe will prove Dutiful.

But

But ſuppoſe Monſieur *Bourignon* had been obliged in Juſtice to have granted to his Daughter a Portion at this time; yet it was not becoming true Piety and Sanctity to go to Law with him. The uſing private Methods, and the Intreaties of Friends to bring him to rights, was allowable; but the going to Law was hardly juſtifiable, becauſe it both increas'd his Diſpleaſure and Wrath at her, and alſo expoſed him as an Unreaſonable, Unjuſt and Undutiful Father, who regarded neither the good of his Child, nor the memory of his former Wife. Law Suits are ſometimes unavoidable, and it may be lawful for the moſt Devout Chriſtian ſometimes to go to Law, but generally Law Suits are Scandalous, and are very unſuitable to that Piety and Perfection which Chriſtians profeſs and ſhould aim at. They ſhew that there is little Juſtice, little Charity, little good Nature, and too much of Inordinate Affection for the things of this Life, either in the Plaintiff or Defendant, and too commonly in both. As a Wiſe Man will part freely with ſome of his Intereſt, to redeem himſelf from the Vexation and Slaviſh Dependance which are Inſeparable from Law Suits; So a Good and Pious Man will, without the compulſion of Law, do more than that which he is obliged to in ſtrict Juſtice. It does not ſavour of great Piety, when one is either very tenacious to keep all they have in Poſſeſſion, or very rigid to exact of others every thing they may claim. *Now therefore*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *there is utterly a fault among you, becauſe ye go to Law one with another: why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather ſuffer your ſelves to be defrauded?* If it is unbecoming Chriſtians to go to Law, except in extraordinary and unavoidable Caſes; if they ought to take In- 1 Cor. 6. 7.

juries and ſuffer Wrong, rather than do it, how doth the Extraordinary Sanctity of *Antonia Bourignon* appear, who went to Law with her own Father, when ſhe had neither Law nor Reaſon on her ſide. She that would have had others live up to the Letter of the Chriſtian Law, why did ſhe not ſo her ſelf here?

Though ſhe gives an account of this Law Suit with her Father, yet he who enlarged and continued her Life, takes no notice of this Paſſage, ſo that it ſeems he knew not how to juſtifie it. But he gives an account of another Law Suit after her Father's Death, for recovering a Share of his Fortune from her Mother-in-Law, which was juſtifiable enough, if ſhe had not pretended to ſo much Self-denial, to an entire abſtractedneſs from the World, and to be ſent to reclaim others from their Worldly-mindedneſs, and to Eſtabliſh a moſt Spiritual Kingdom upon Earth. The aforeſaid Author was ſenſible of this Objection, and therefore he obviates it, and according to his Impious and Blaſphemous Cuſtom, he aſcribes it to God: And ſays, That *he engaged her in this Suit, and told her, that it was for his Divine Glory, and that ſhe would have occaſion for the Goods ſhe obtained.* He alſo runs out in the Enumeration of the good Deeds done by *Madamoiſelle*, to ſhew how happy 'twas for others that ſhe was Rich: and he might have inſtanc'd one more, if the Story be true which goes of Monſieur *Poiret*, who is ſaid to be the Author of this Life, *viz.* That ſhe left him a very good Legacy. But may not any thing be juſtified after this manner? Did not *Judas* varniſh his Covetouſneſs with a ſhew of Charity? Compaſſion to the Poor was pretended, but the real cauſe why he complain'd of the *waſt of Ointment*, was the keeping of the Bag. How many

La Vie Cont. c. 12.

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do excuse their Covetousness, and sordid Drudgery after the Things of this Life, by the Commands of being Diligent in their Business, of providing for their Family? But what signifie Words when Actions declare the contrary? Actions are true Indications of the inward Temper, and it doth sufficiently appear by these Particulars, That though *Antonia* talked often of a Contempt of the World, yet like other pretended Saints, her Mind looked very much towards it.

Which is further made out by her becoming Heir to Monsieur *Du Cort*, to the great disturbance of her own Quiet, and to the Prejudice of others. This Man was so devoted to this Woman, that he thought nothing good but that which she approved, and therefore certainly he would not have made over his Estate to her, without her Advice and Direction, especially seeing they lived in one House together. Therefore also we may very justly conclude, that this Saint had a little tincture of Covetousness, seeing she desired Goods which she had no manner of Right to, which she did not need, having enough besides, and which she could not possess without defrauding the Relations and Kinsfolk of *Du Cort*, nor without a considerable diversion to that great Design, upon which she pretended that she was sent to the World, *viz.* The renewing the Church, and the bringing Men to true Perfection. For this involved her in great Trouble, raised her many Enemies, and was the occasion of very hot Persecutions; all which she would have avoided, if she had not minded the things of the World as much or more than the things of God. *No man*, saith St. *Paul*, *that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of*

Ibid. c. 22. *Dictionaire Hist. & Critique per M. Baile.*

Ibid.

2 Tim. 2. 4.

this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. If she was called to build the House of God, how came she to study so much the encrease and bettering of an Earthly Fortune, especially to the wronging of others? Are Riches necessary to the erecting of a Spiritual House? Is not this suspicious? Was this grasping at all she could get, a proper method to convert Men from the love of the World? Was this like St. *Paul*, who would not use his own Right, that his Doctrine and Ministry might not be suspected? How can they compare this Woman to *Jesus Christ?* How can they raise her Sanctity to an exactness with His, when she endeavoured to be as rich as possible? whereas He, both to shew and teach a true contempt of the World, did chuse to be poorer than the *foxes*, or the *fowls of the air*; for the one have *nests*, and the other have *holes*, but *he had no place where to lay his head?*

But this is not the only disagreement which is betwixt Madamoiselle *Bourignon* and Jesus Christ; so that she cannot be reckoned either truly or perfectly holy, if he be the Standard. For,

Fifthly, As it could be proved by a thousand Passages, she was exceedingly vain, and used always to magnifie her self; she despised others, and could not believe well of any body; nay, she would not admit that there was so much as any sincere Christian in the World; she slighted the Sacraments, and all holy Ordinances, as far below her, contrary to the practice of Jesus Christ, who though he needed them as little as any, yet he submitted to them, and carefully observed them, out of respect to the Divine Institution, to give good Example unto others, and to teach Humility to the most Perfect. She withdrew from

from the Publick Worſhip, and did forſake the Aſſemblies of all ſorts of Chriſtians, contrary to the expreſs Precept of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* x. 25. Theſe, and ſeveral other Particulars will fully appear hereafter; and both theſe and the former Inſtances, in my judgment, are incompatible with ſuch great and extraordinary Sanctity as is aſcribed to *Antonia Bourignon*; they do not appear to me ſmall Beauty-ſpots, but like ugly Scabs and Ulcers, which quite disfigure the Face of a Saint.

Thus the firſt Pillar which prop'd up the high Character formerly given to *Antonia Bourignon* is removed, and I judge the reſt may be taken away with as little difficulty.

A Second thing pretended for exalting Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* above all Mankind, is, her knowledge of Secret Thoughts, and of things done at a diſtance. And if 'twas true, ſhe muſt indeed be acknowledged to be ſomewhat more than Humane: For both Reaſon and Scripture give it as a peculiar Property of God, to know the Heart of Man, and their Thoughts afar off; and this is one of the Proofs of the Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he was Καρδιογνώστης: that he needed not that any ſhould tell him what was in Man, becauſe he knew it before-hand. But how doth it appear that this Woman did penetrate ſo much into the Hearts of Men, that ſhe could know what was tranſacted there, without communication, and without external appearances? for otherwiſe it was no ſtrange thing. We have only ſome general Aſſertions of Monſieur *du Cort* for it, and not any Inſtance which may convince us. And by ſeveral Inſtances it doth appear, that he was one very eaſily impoſed upon: He was poſſeſſed with a high Opi- XXI.

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nion of this Woman; he verily believed that ſhe was Inſpired, and therefore was fully diſpoſed to magnifie every thing which ſhe ſaid or did, as her Vanity was ready enough to feed this extravagant Fancy. Prepoſſeſſion has a ſtrange aſcendant upon Mens Belief. Thus the Vulgar, who follow Mountebanks, Aſtrologers and Fortune-tellers, make one another believe wonderful Inſtances of the Skill of theſe Perſons, in the diſcovery of Secrets; when all the while, the cunning Men only told them the things which they had learn'd from themſelves, by their ſimple and unwary Anſwers, and the inconſiderate words which had dropt from them.

The Knowledge of Things at a diſtance, though it be rare and unaccountable, yet it is not ſo miraculous as the knowledge of Mens Thoughts, nor doth it prove the Perſon Inſpired. It is certain, that ſome Perſons, in the High-lands of *Scotland* particularly, have that which is called the *Second Sight*, by which, ſometimes, they have imparted to them thoſe things which are tranſacted in ſome diſtant place, or which are to fall out ſhortly: And it is alſo certain, by undoubted Teſtimonies both from credible Hiſtories, and living Witneſſes, that an Account of Battels has been given the very day and hour in which they have been fought, at ſome hundred and thouſand miles diſtance. I could give Inſtances of both theſe in our own time, if I had allowance to publiſh them, from the Perſons whoſe Names I ſhould be obliged to uſe.

Wherefore, as there is no Evidence or ſufficient Proof, that *Antonia Bourignon* knew the ſecret Thoughts of Mens Hearts; ſo, ſuppoſing that ſhe did ſometimes declare the things done in places remote from her, yet this is not a good foundation for ſo ſublime and divine

vine a Character as she hath amongst her Disciples; because this has been, and is still done by some or other, who can lay no claim to any extraordinary Merit, or particular Communication with God. How this should come to pass, I will not adventure to explain; for I reckon it among the *Arcana Dei & Naturæ*, which Philosophy it self cannot reach, except it be said that it is by the means of Spirits, whose Motion and Knowledge do much exceed ours, who are wrapt up in the thick and heavy Vehicle of the Flesh.

XXII. A Third Pretence for Elevating *Antonia Bourignon* so high, is, her being able to *foretell things to come*; *which* (says Monsieur *du Cort*) *she did not by way of Supposition, nor did she relate them as if she had dream'd them*: So he would have us to believe that she foretold future things plainly and positively as they were to happen, and as they did come to pass. And this, indeed, is so far above all the Knowledge which can be acquired by Natural means, that it must be confess'd, that they who can do this, must have something more than common Nature bestows. The Wisest, by either Reason or Observation, can only guess at that which shall be, and they both may be, and often are mistaken in their most reasonable Conjectures. Events, and Future Accidents, are not to be seen, by the best Telescopes, in the Stars and Planets, though Astrologers have long pretended to it: but the vanity of their Science has been often exposed, and there can be produced manifold Instances of the foolish and miserable Delusions of those who have trusted to it.

Light of the World, Pref. p. 44.

Some think the Fore-knowledge of all things impossible, and therefore they deny, even to God himself, the Prescience of such things as depend upon the arbitrary

arbitrary Will and Pleaſure of Free Agents, among whom Monſieur *Poiret* makes one: But this is a robbing God of an Eſſential Attribute, which Reaſon and Scripture give unto him, and of which he has given many wonderful and convincing Manifeſtations. God certainly knows every thing which is to fall out in the World; nothing can happen contrary to his Will, or beyond his Knowledge and Expectation, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo: for as he cannot be reſiſted, ſo neither is he liable to be ſurpriſed. This is incomprehenſible, but it is true; and they who think otherwiſe, have no true Notion, but mean and unſuitable Thoughts of the Infinite Being. And as God certainly hath the fore-knowledge of all things, ſo unleſs they be revealed ſome way or other, no Man can know before-hand theſe things which depend not upon Natural Cauſes, neither are the Effects of that Order that is eſtabliſhed in Nature, as Eclipſes of the Sun and Moon, the Conjunction of the Planets, and the like, which thoſe who are skilful in Aſtronomy can calculate for ſome thouſands of years to come.

See *Enquiry into the Nature*, &c. *of Chriſtian Faith*, part. 2. p. 121.

Sure and undoubted Prophecies, as well as true Miracles, are certainly from God; they both bear their own Teſtimony, and are a ſufficient Teſtimony to Perſons and Things which are agreeable to the Nature of God, and which do not contradict his expreſs and poſitive Will. St. *Peter* preferreth the conviction of Prophecy to that of Senſe: *We have not* (ſaith he) *followed cunningly deviſed fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but were eye-witneſſes of his majeſty: And we have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed*, 2 Pet. i. 16,19. But though all

all Miracles and Prophecies are Super-natural, yet neither Persons nor Doctrines are to be received as from Heaven, upon single Instances of either Miracles or Prophecies, especially if the Consequence be unworthy of God, and contrary to other certain and unquestionable Declarations of his Will. For God himself hath forwarned us, *Deut.* xiii. 1. that he may sometimes permit False Prophets, for a tryal to his People, who may do Wonders, and give Signs which come to pass; and he there not only forbids to hearken to such, but also he ordains the putting such False Prophets to death, notwithstanding of their Wonders and Signs. So likewise it is said, That *there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect.* Mat. xxiv. 24.

Wherefore, even supposing that *Antonia Bourignon* has uttered some Prophecies, and foretold some things which came to pass, she may deserve to be rejected, instead of paying her Divine Honour, as some do. But how much more deservedly is she to be abhorred, if she has uttered Lyes, and spoken falsly in the Name of the Lord! *When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.* Deut. xviii. 22. Now this Woman has told things very plainly and positively, which have not yet come to pass; as, That the Last Judgment was near at hand, when she had her Conferences with Monsieur *du Cort*; That within Three Years it would begin: *Believe me, Sir, There is nothing more true; we actually live in the Last Times; and the Judgment is so near, that before Three Years, I believe that you will see the effects* *Light of the World*, Conf. 2. part 1. p. 17.

La Vie Cont. c.19. p. 275. *of it.* These Conferences were written in the Year 1664, though they were held long before; so that it is almost Forty Years since, and yet there is no more appearance of the near approach of that Terrible Day, than there was some hundred of years before she was born. So that here is a notorious Falshhood, besides a great Presumption, to take upon her to declare that which Jesus (whom we have all reason to believe) says the very Angels in Heaven do not know, nor any save the Father, and which shall come upon Men *like a thief in the night.*

Light of the World, part 1. p. 144. In like manner, she put Monsieur *du Cort* in hopes of seeing Christ actually in the Clouds: And as for her self, she did not doubt it, but expected it very shortly; and yet both he and she are dead, without that desirable Sight. Could she therefore speak these things by Divine Inspiration? Doth it not appear that she was a Deceiver of others, and also deceived her self? Indeed, she was so much deceived, that she would not believe that she was a dying, notwithstanding of her Age and Sickness; and when it came to the extremity, that she see perceived Death inevitable, she said, *That it was not the Will of God, that she should die then; for she had not done that for which she was sent, nor that which she should have done and written.*

La Vie Cont. c.34. p. 580. Thus there did not appear in this Woman the true Signs of the Spirit of God, but strong Delusions to the very last; and they must be strangely deluded and infatuated, who can believe this Woman Divinely Inspired, when they themselves do write and publish her gross Deceptions and Mistakes.

XXIII. A Fourth Reason which perswades the Disciples of *Antonia Bourignon* to have her in so high esteem, is, Her sublime and wonderful Knowledge of Divine Mysteries,

ſteries, with an Uniformity and Agreement of Sentiments both with her Self and Scripture. It muſt indeed be acknowledged, that this Woman does ſpeak and write more plainly and intelligibly than any of the *Myſtick Sect*; and is ſomewhat more upon the *Moral* than others of that Gang, who feed too much upon curious Speculations: nor is ſhe behind any in her attempts to penetrate into all the Myſteries of Nature and Religion, and is as poſitive as any Philoſopher can be: which inconſiderate Perſons take for plain Evidence. Her Spirit was not common, and ſhe often takes high flights; but they are flights for which her Fancy is to be admired, rather than her Judgment. She, indeed, ſoars above Dull, Sober, Thinking Souls, who cannot riſe higher than Reaſon and Meditation will permit; the laſt of which, they ſay, ſhe was never clogg'd with, and the firſt very ſeldom. I do not deny that her Notions are ſublime; and if that be a good reaſon for giving to her extraordinary Honour, we ought alſo to honour no leſs many a Bedlamite, whoſe Notions are and have been as much ſurprizing. But who will not preferr Common Senſe, and a Sound Head, to the moſt ſublime Conceits, if they either proceed from, or be attended with Madneſs? Truth is of more value than Sublimity, and Uſeful Knowledge is to be ſtudied rather than Curious. Many are preſumptuous to thruſt themſelves within the Veil whither they are forbidden; they ſearch farther into Secrets and Myſteries than they are allowed, and they obtrude upon the World Relations which are not plain and evident; and for that very cauſe they ought not to be admitted, nor received with credit, whatever ſublimity be in them.

As to the consistency of her Notions, and their agreement with Scripture; if this was true, 'twould prove something: But it is so far from being true, that I dare venture my Reputation, to prove that the Notions of *Antonia Bourignon* do neither hang well together, nor are they consonant to the Scriptures: Which, with God's assistance, shall appear to the satisfaction of all unbyas's'd Persons, in the following *Narratives*, when I come to examine her particular Tenets and Opinions.

XXIV. A Fifth Inducement to the receiving *Antonia Bourignon* as one Divinely Inspired, is, The Super-natural means by which she came to the Knowledge of all things, *viz.* without reading, without consulting Men or Books, and even without Meditation. Her Knowledge, as they say, was not acquired like other Mens, by the fatigue of Reading and Study, or the trouble of Thinking, but all was immediately inspired into her. And indeed it must be owned, that she consulted Men and Books very little, for she had both in great contempt; nay, the Sacred Scriptures themselves were not considered by her, for she threw them aside, as unworthy of her study, saying, *That she could easily write such Books her self.* And yet after all, there is no great reason to flourish so much in the commendation of her Knowledge, and sublime Thoughts; for unless they be solid and true, 'tis not much matter how she came by them; and besides, they were suggested by her Conversation with others, by the Sermons which she heard, by Conferences with Confessors, Priests, and learned Men. They had said something, if they had made her to be born and bred up in an Island by her self, like *ABN TOKDAN*, whose History Dr. *Pocock* translates from the *Arabick*;

Arabick; and as it is fabled of him too, if immediately, upon her firſt coming forth, without inſtruction, or the leaſt ſuggeſtion from any, ſhe had been able to ſpeak upon all Points, both common and extraordinary. It was viſible that the Apoſtles were Inſpired, when without Education, without being acquainted with Letters, when after ſo many years drudgery in their particular Trades, they were capable to ſpeak all Languages, to reaſon with Prieſts, Scribes and Philoſophers about the higheſt Points of Religion, to inſtruct the fulfilling of dark Prophecies, and to unfold the hardeſt Texts of Scripture. But what wonder is it, that one of Spirit, and quick Imagination, given to Contemplation and Retirement, ſhould talk of things that were the common ſubject of thoſe ſhe converſed with, eſpecially when ſhe miſſes the Mark as often as ſhe hits it, and runs her ſelf and others into groſs Miſtakes.

This Account they give of *Antonia Bourignon*; and the magnifying her ſo much for it, brings to my remembrance two mean Perſons, one of them lived within the firſt Pariſh that I had under my charge, the other border'd upon it. This laſt could read, and was a contemplative Perſon; he did not much value the World, and follow'd no Trade, except ſometimes to teach the Children of his Neighbours to read; he had not the opportunity of Books, and yet he ſtudied the high Points of Predeſtination, Election, Free-will, and its conſiſtency with Divine Preſcience and Providence, of the ſtate of departed Souls, and the manner of their Reſurrection; and I have often been ſurprized with his Notions. The Metaphyſical Head of Monſieur *Poiret* would have been much delighted with him; and if he had known him, he

he had certainly coupled him with *Antonia Bourignon.*

The other was a common Weaver by his Trade, and followed it, who could neither read nor write, but he had a Head capable of Knowledge, and did actually know both the Hiſtorical and Doctrinal part of Scripture, and did point out the particular Chapter and Verſe where any Paſſage was, as well as thoſe who could read; he could give ſome Account of the Primitive Church, the Doctrine, Diſcipline, Hereſies and Councils of the firſt Centuries, and underſtood pretty well the modern Controverſies with the *Church of Rome*, *Quakers*, *Anabaptiſts*, and others, and all this merely by his careful attention to Sermons, and by getting ſome or other to read to him ſuch Books as he could find, while he was at work for himſelf and Family: but which was beſt in this Man, he was not vain, nor ſelf-conceited; he did not deſpiſe the Publick Ordinances, nor ſet himſelf up above the Teaching of his lawful Paſtors. None was more ready to receive Inſtruction; and I have ſeveral times employed him to teach and prepare ſome of his Neighbours, eſpecially the Servants and Youth, for their Publick Examinations, that they might be capable to receive the Sacrament.

XXV. The laſt Reaſon given for having Madamoiſelle *Bourignon* in ſo high eſteem, is, The Appearance of a a *Comet* when ſhe was born, when ſhe firſt began to write, and at her death. This I think hardly worth the conſidering, for 'twill have but little weight with Perſons of Senſe and Judgment. For though I am far from ſlighting the Signs, Wonders, and Extraordinary Appearances which God is ſometimes pleaſed to give in thoſe Regions above; yet the Inferences

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are not much to be regarded, which fanciful and cunning Men draw from them, to amuſe unthinking People, and to diſpoſe them to favour their Humour, Intereſt and Paſſions. Eclipſes were ſometimes as formidable as Comets; and though Comets be not yet ſo well underſtood, becauſe they appear ſeldom; nevertheleſs ſome Skilful Aſtronomers have calculated their Motions, and reduced them to ſome Syſtem, which like that of other Planets, may be improv'd by after Obſervations. Comets indeed are Prodigies; that is, they are prodigious and ſtupendous Inſtances of God's Power, of the Vaſtneſs of the Creation, and Extent of the Univerſe; But how can they be ſaid to point out particular Perſons and Places? when, like the Sun, they are ſeen every where. *Madamoiſelle* muſt be equal to Jeſus Chriſt in every thing, and becauſe there was a Star which directed the Wiſe Men of the Eaſt to his very Door, therefore ſhe muſt have a Comet; and I wonder that he did not give this Reaſon, why her ſign was more viſible than his, becauſe ſhe was to be the greater and more Publick Bleſſing; no doubt the next Edition of her Life will have it. But the Fool ſhould have remember'd that 'twas not for the Credit of his Adorable Miſtriſs, to mention a Comet, or to apply it to her; becauſe all the Superſtitious Obſervers of Comets, have look'd upon them as Preſages of the Divine Wrath and Vengeance: If therefore theſe Comets were given for a ſign to *Antonia Bourignon*, they ſignifie that ſhe is the Scourge of God, a heavy Judgment to all who follow her. Which Interpretation is more juſt and reaſonable than the other; for there cannot be a greater Judgment, than to be given up to Lyes and ſtrong Deluſions, which is the Judgment threatned to thoſe who

do

do not believe the Truth, but have Pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs, that they may be Damned.

XXVI. Thus I have conſidered and examined the Reaſons pretended for the high Character of Madamoiſelle *Bourignon*, and have ſhewed the weakneſs of them; and if the Reaſons be not ſufficient to perſwade us, the Authority of *De Cort*, *Poiret*, and others, who have publiſh'd her Hiſtory will be found yet of leſs avail, for it is evident to all who read them, that they take but little heed to what they ſay: Paſſion and Fancy do inſpire them more than Truth, and they write not like faithful Hiſtorians, but like Romancers, like Flatterers, and thoſe who are brib'd to make Panegyricks, who ſtudy Hyperboles, and the Art of magnifying every thing. They are far from the Integrity and Candour of the Holy Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, who propoſe things plainly without any Affectation of Language, they write the Naked Truth, and deſpiſe the Artificial Dreſs of Words, which in the Judgment of all Wiſe Men, doth deface rather than beautifie; they ſet the Matter ſimply before us, and leave the Readers to draw the Conſequence, which is done like Men who neither are deceived, nor intend to deceive. Whereas the other diſguiſe Matters, being afraid to ſhew them as they are; they ſtudy the enticing words of Man's Wiſdom, and in the multitude of their words, they loſe themſelves and the Truth too, and deceive others with an empty ſound.

I will give one or two Inſtances, and let any judge whether I have not Reaſon on my ſide. The Firſt ſhall be concerning that Paſſage of *Madamoiſelle*, when but four Years old, which is very much inſiſted upon, *viz.* That then *ſhe ask'd for the Country of Chriſtians*, *La Vie Ext.* §. 3.

and

and often desired to be carried thither. I do confess, that if at that Age she understood what she said, 'twas remarkable; 'twas much for a Child to be sensible of the contrariety betwixt Christians and the Religion which they profess; though nothing is more palpable, and that one may, even in Christendom it self, ask for a Christian, as well as the Philosopher at *Athens* did look for a Man at Noon-day, that is, one who acted wisely and reasonably. But yet even this is not Matter of much Admiration, when it is remembred that common Children do often drop Sayings worthy of the wisest, without being sensible of the Importance of their own words. This might have been occasion'd by the Pious Discourses of her Father and others about her, when they read the New Testament, which Monsieur *Bourignon* caus'd to be put into the hands of his Children, notwithstanding that he was in the Communion of the Roman Church. However, the Author of her Life shews only his own vain Humour, when he spends almost a whole Chapter upon it, and magnifies this above all that was ever said or written. 'All Doctors and Teachers, 'yea, all the World ought to be silent, and to hearken 'to the Lisping of this Infant; and for my part, I 'love better to hear and meditate on these four words, '(*where is the Country of Christians*) than to turn over 'all the Volumes of all the Learned of the World. 'Millions of Millions of Sermons are not to be 'compared to them from which more Light, 'more Instruction, more Saving Knowledge, more 'Rules for the Conduct of Life, may be drawn, 'than from all the most reasonable Opinions and 'Speculations, which often do not import much, 'and which have not more certainty than the Do-

La Vie Cont. c. 2.

See *Light of the World*, Part I. p. 7.

Ibid. p. 16, 17.

Nouveaux Sauveurs de la Terre.

'ctrine of the probable Opinions of the *new Saviours* ' *of the World.*

Again, The Account of her Chaſtity, which is ſet down in the Second Article of this Narrative is a high ſtretch beyond Truth and the common ſence of Mankind; for however free *Madamoiſelle* might be of carnal Inclinations after her ſerious Converſion to God, yet it is hardly credible that all the while ſhe followed a vain Converſation, *ſhe* never had *one Thought unbecoming the Chaſtity of the pureſt Virgin State*; eſpecially when ſhe confeſſes that ſhe delighted much in Mens Company. If the Opinion of ſome be received, that none are pure Virgins but ſuch as do not know the diſtinction of Sexes; *Madamoiſelle* cannot paſs for one, for ſhe had as much Philoſophy, I will not ſay Experience, as to know that, nay, and the uſe of theſe Diſtinctions too; for ſometimes ſhe talks pretty ſenſibly of the Pleaſure of Conception and Propagation, that Sin only hinders Women from having as much Pleaſure in the Birth, as now they have in the Conceiving, and that in the other World this Pleaſure ſhall not be light and ſhort as at preſent, but laſting and perpetual. *Antonia* was not altogether free of Suſpition, but I will not accuſe her; yet if ſhe was not guilty of actual Defilements, there is one Paſſage which gives occaſion to ſuſpect her Imagination. Take her own account of it, which is thus: ' One *Sunday* after Dinner, being in a pro- ' found retreat, it was ſaid to me, *Why does thou not* ' *deſire Children*? I anſwered, Children, Lord? give ' me Children. Inſtantly the Paſtor (which I ſuppoſe ' was Monſieur *de Cort*) was ſtrongly imprinted in ' my Fancy, as if he had caſt himſelf into my Em- ' braces. I was ſurprized and ſaid, Men, Lord, theſe

La Vie Cont. p. 330.

La Parole de Dieu, p. 158.

are

'are Men? It was answered, Yes, they are Men. 'Upon which, I thought, I conceived five comely 'Persons, *P. C. E. L. L.*

But whatever may be pleaded for *Madamoiselle* her self; Monsieur *Poiret*, or whoever it was that continued her Life, strain'd a Figure above all Truth, and rais'd his Hyperbole to a perfect Falshood, when he said, *That she sent forth such an Odour of Continence, as made others forget the Pleasures of the Flesh*: For both he and she give an Account how that she was several times assaulted, first at *Blatton*, when she fled from her Father's House, disguised as a Hermite, where she was taken up, by some Soldiers, as a suspected Person, and where the Officer that commanded them kept her all night in a Chamber with himself, continually importuning her to lie with him. Again, In her Solitude at the Church of St. *Andrew*, near *Lisle*, a Nephew of the Pastor of that Church made attempts upon her. And lastly, The famous Monsieur *Saulieu*, whom at first she took for a great Saint, pursued her so much, that she was forced to ask the assistance of others, to be delivered from him.

La Parole, de Dieu, p. 16. Ib. p. 64. Ib. p. 77, 78.

Now what regard is to be paid to these Men, who do so little consider what they write, who contradict themselves while the Pen is in their Hand, and are so impudent as to require a Belief, contrary to their own very Relations. I know no excuse for this, but that which Monsieur *Poiret* gives on another occasion, in his *Preface* to his Treatise of the *Oeconomy Divine*; with which, I suppose, very few will be satisfied:

'All Diversity is not Contrariety; often, Contra-'dictions are only in Appearance, and in the Spirit 'of the Readers: but to deal ingenuously, I desire 'the Reader not to give himself the trouble, more

'than

than I do, to adjust my Sentiments together, but but let him search out the Truth independently from what I have said before. Commonly, when I write a thing, I do not consider what I have said elsewhere, but I proceed to discover the Truth anew. Lying may be in a thousand ways contrary to it self: whosoever puts off Falsehood, ought to have a good Memory, and to remember what he has said; *Mendacem oportet esse memorem*: but as Truth is uniform, so whosoever follows its course, needs neither Memory nor Reflection upon what is past.

A most notable way for reconciling Contradictions, and for removing the shame of belying one's self! By Monsieur *Poiret*'s leave, Memory and Reflection are very necessary to secure us from wandring out of the way of Truth; and it is certain, that he who contradicts himself, as he has often done, does not tread the paths of Truth: And therefore neither his Evidence, nor the Evidence of Monsieur *du Cort*, (who are the Heads of the *Bourignianist Faction*) are sufficient for receiving *Antonia Bourignon* as sent of God, and Divinely Inspired; especially when the same Monsieur *Poiret* recommends Persons as Divine and Extraordinary, whom wise and sober Men can have no esteem for, as particularly *Jacob Behmen*, who is only to be admired for his wild Notions and Nonsence. But why should not *Fouls of a feather fly together*?

FINIS.

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The Reader is entreated to put *Fancy* for *Passion*, p. 5. l. 19. and to excuse the other *Errata*, if there be any.

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